

## A HEART STORY; OR, THE HUSBAND AND WIFE.

BY EDITH CLARE.

"AND you will marry him?" continued Maria, looking searchingly into the face of her sister. "Have you no fears, no misgivings, in so doing? Remember, 'tis a fearful step you are taking—a step which will bring happiness or misery forever!" and the young girl shuddered at the picture her own words had suggested.

"Yes, Maria, I shall marry him. He is good, truthful and honest. Will not these insure happiness? And, besides, I love him," added she, with a softened blush. "What more could my sister wish?"

"But, my dear Harrie, are you certain you love him? Oh, do, I beg—I entreat of you, fathom well your heart. Look to its every feeling and motive. Lay them in array before you, and, if there is one unworthy thought there, pluck it out, and cast it thence. A month hence and it will be too late. Do it now, oh! do it now, my sister, as you hope for happiness here or hereafter!"

The young girl thus addressed, turned away from the searching and earnest gaze of her sister. That sister had ever read her heart—she read it now; and with pain saw the wrong she was committing. She resolved that nothing should be left undone to stay the step she was contemplating. But it was of no avail; and ere a month had passed, Frederick Cummings and Harrie Campbel were husband and wife. The wedding over, with all its train of travelling and parties and ceremony, and they settled down to the quiet routine of domestic life.

Maria and Harrie Campbel were only children of a wealthy and distinguished merchant in the city of L—, Massachusetts. They had been well educated—tenderly and faithfully cared for and watched over by a fond and devoted mother, and had come to womanhood with more than ordinary shares of truth, sincerity, and moral worth. Maria, the eldest, was indeed a noble girl, and everywhere won love and esteem. Tall, graceful and dignified, she moved about like one born to command. Yet she was loving and affectionate as a very child. She, and she alone, could ever control her more impulsive and wayward sister. Yet even she could not always do it. More

beautiful—if the perfect feature constitutes beauty—more petted and flattered by those about her, Harrie had become a little, a very little, spoiled. She was now just eighteen—the very age, perhaps, when young ladies deem themselves most wise, most secure from evil, and most capable of taking care of themselves. She had met Frederick Cummings but a short time previous to the opening of our story. She was pleased, fascinated; and when he offered her his hand, heart and fortune, it was readily accepted.

Yet Harrie believed she loved him, else would she not have become his wife. And she did love him—love him better and with a purer love than do half those who thus give themselves away.

Frederick Cummings was wealthy. He owned largely in the manufacturing establishments with which that city abounds. Emphatically he was a business-man; and, as Harrie had said, good, truthful, and thoroughly honest. It may not be always thus; yet do we believe it is generally so. Frederick was less exacting—less *mean*—to use a word in mercantile parlance—than most of his brother extortioners. But he had his faults. He was a straight-forward, matter-of-fact sort of a man, and had too little sympathy for all those who lived in a different atmosphere from his own. Alas! that he should have chosen such a wife!—alas! that she should have accepted him!

Maria had seen all this, and how unfitted were their hearts for each other. If ever there was one being on earth little fitted to live alone—to live without sympathy—it was Harrie Campbel. Ardent in affections, impulsive in all movements, and generous in her disposition, she constantly needed some one on whom to lean—and that a loved and trusted one. Her imagination was active, brilliant; and her whole feelings more or less tinged with romance.

She loved Frederick Cummings better than any other one whom she had ever met. She saw that he loved her; and, although she could not but feel that the return she gave was not the soul-engrossing passion she had ever dreamed it must be, to ensure perfect happiness, yet she accepted him.

And thousands thus give themselves away.

Yet, these may be called *happy marriages*; for so many are entered into with even less security for all their future weal or woe. Men and women, in all things else so clear-sighted and cautious, are here but very creatures of chance. A couple meet—fall in love, or imagine they do, flirt awhile, talk of mutual feeling and the like, and end by getting married. Aye, if they awake not to utter wretchedness, blessed are they!

And blessed were Frederick and Harrie. True, he cared less, too, for flowers and books, pictures and music, than did she. But he placed them ever at her disposal, so how could she complain. He was ever ready to attend her slightest bidding, where care or money could obey it. What more was wanting?

Ah! to Harrie there was much. She wanted him to feel, to enjoy, and to suffer with her. She yearned for a *heart-union*. Alas! that such a one should be so rarely found! 'Tis an anomaly when it is met, depend upon it. I am aware that I may be censured for severity. Well, let it be so. I only ask every lady reader of mine to look into her own heart, to candidly and honestly examine it, and then tell me if I am wrong. I bide the answer.

There came to L —, a young and talented lawyer, Abbot Elkins by name, who soon became well and widely known in the circles where Mr. Cummings and his wife moved. Harrie and he often met. They found much in each heart to accord with the other, and daily their intimacy increased. Secure in his wife's affection, Cummings never dreamed of suspicion. Safe in her own convictions of duty, Harrie never dreamed of danger; and thus passed they on.

Ah! 'twas a fearful ordeal for that young wife. Better had they never met, or met when each was single. Alike in tastes, feeling, and disposition—both warm-hearted, impulsive, and imaginative—how could they otherwise than become attached? 'T were not in human nature—not in a lady's nature, at least—to avoid it. Yet both deemed the attachment pure and innocent. And so, perhaps, it was. But Harrie, although loving her husband, as we have said before, yet was not *perfectly satisfied*; and Abbot's affections were hitherto free. Yet, in justice to both be it said, had either seen their danger, it had been otherwise.

Abbot was called away to attend the bed-side of his dying mother. Most tenderly and devotedly had he loved her, and the summons had been to him a death-blow. He had been spending the evening at Mr. Cummings' when the message came. Instinctively he turned to Harrie for sympathy; and the ready tear, and hasty "God

bless you," as he pressed her hand in parting, told one, at least, the true state of the case. To Harrie, how long were the hours of his absence! Her music, her drawing and painting, her favorite books, all lost their interest. Society, even, failed to amuse her; for the unmeaning and senseless remarks of those about her, fell on her ear like mockery. Her husband, as was his wont, would be discussing the merits of some new piece of machinery, or the value of a water privilege, and she must mingle with the crowd. True, she had ever mingled thus; but when Abbot was there, he frequently gave a new tone and coloring to the whole series of conversation and amusements. So much can be accomplished by one master-mind, when its powers are rightly wielded. Would there were more in society, in this respect, at least, like Abbot Elkins.

Abbot was absent three months, and during that period, Harrie had much time for reflection. She was forced to acknowledge too—for she could deceive herself no longer—that she loved Abbot Elkins with her whole heart—while her hand was given to another. It was a humiliating, a terrible acknowledgement even to herself. She felt that she had outraged truth and honor, wronged her lawful husband, and debased herself. Naturally conscientious in the extreme, she now suffered intensely. But turn which way soever she would, there was the fearful and guilty conviction—for guilty she deemed herself in the sight of heaven. Oh! how she stood and prayed that she might root out this love from her heart—that she might meet *him* calmly as a passing friend. But it was of no avail. He came; and she had no power to check the rapid beating of her heart, or the trembling of her fingers as they lay in his. Poor Harrie! thy misery is but just commenced.

And Abbot Elkins knew and felt their situation; yet he loved, and could not tear himself away. Day by day he lingered at her side, guiding her pencil or diverting her thoughts, till it seemed they could scarce live apart. Immersed in business, as was Mr. Cummings, he saw not how matters stood. Lively and cheerful, Abbot ever seemed in his presence. He felt that his wife enjoyed his society, and ever warmly welcomed him to his domestic hearth. Warm-hearted and single-minded man! he would have done anything, received any visitor, to give his wife pleasure; for, with all the heart he had to spare from spindle and loom, did he love her. And Harrie knew this; thereby increasing her own self-condemnation.

"Oh! Harrie, doom me not to misery," said the soft and earnest voice of Abbot Elkins, as he

stood, pale and almost breathless from emotion, before her he loved—"I cannot, *will not* live without thee!" and he grasped her hand almost convulsively.

Instantly she withdrew it; and summoning all her self-control, said calmly—

"Abbot, this is not right—it is unjust and unmanly. Am I not the wife of another? Oh! break not again my resolution. I have said that this is the last time I will ever see you alone. Help me to persevere in my resolve."

"What, Harrie! never see me more—never more let me tell you how dear you have become? I tell you it shall not be! You shall be mine! you are mine, in the sight of heaven, now!"

"Hush, hush, Abbot. This is folly—crime. You know that I already suffer with you; for but too well do you know my ill-concealed love. But I will not be a mark for the finger of scorn. I shudder when I think of it! And my husband—how he loves me. Kind and generous man! Has he not surrounded me with everything necessary for my happiness? Has he not loved me more than any other one on earth? And is this, then, my return? Oh! Abbot, Abbot—do not urge me to commit further wrong. Let me go to him, rather, and acknowledge the error of the past. Let me crave his forgiveness—let me still return his love!"

"And see him spurn me from his door—trample me under his feet, and hate me forever! No, Harrie, if you *love* me you will not doom me to this!" and he looked imploringly, in her face.

"Abbot hear me this once. *I love you*—how well, God only knows. Had we met earlier—met when I was free, I dare hardly think what might have been our happiness. But now I am *a wife*. Would you see me a scorned and despised outcast among men? No, no, you will not," added she, entreatingly. "Rather will you suffer with me—*away* from me, rather than see me this. Tell me, will you not?"

Abbot gazed on her pale and suffering cheek. That very suffering he had helped to cause. Should he deepen it? Should he, indeed, render her the thing so to be despised? *Could* he do it with one he loved? His better nature was aroused—passion was stilled, and again taking her hand, more gently than before, he added, "pardon me, Harrie, I will no longer cause you unnecessary suffering. Forget the past—let us be *friends*!"

"But friends only in name," replied she, sorrowfully. "We, who have become all the world to each other—pardon me this once, if I speak the whole truth—cannot meet as do others. All our resolves would crumble to the dust. No,

we must part forever!" and she shuddered as she said it.

Again her companion's impetuosity returned. He would have spoken, but she silenced him with a look.

"Nay, Abbot, it must be so, at least, for the present. Perhaps when time shall have wrought a change—as though sweet hearts could change—we may again meet as in former days. But not now, oh, not now!"

Abbot turned away in sorrow. He *felt* her words were right; but it was hard to yield. Yet again his better nature triumphed; and, turning to her once more, he replied, "I will do as you bid me, Harrie—I will leave you. In other lands and other scenes I will seek forgiveness and forgetfulness. But oh," and his voice trembled as he spoke it, "should you ever need assistance, should you ever again crave affection, remember Abbot Elkins will serve you ever with his life. And now, Harrie, farewell!" Once more he pressed her hand convulsively, and was gone.

And now Harrie was alone. No longer she needed the partial veil she had assumed, and she gave full vent to the emotion of her crushed and bleeding heart. Oh, God! what agony was hers! What a life of misery was before her! She had bid farewell to the being dearest to her on earth—henceforth she must live alone. *Alone!* Oh, the fearful import of that one word when it forces itself upon the heart! Better death—aye, a thousand times better, than life to the loving heart *alone!*

Yet, Harrie had chosen the right; and when the violence of her first emotions had passed away, she felt a sort of conscientious pride in having been enabled thus to choose. The world knew not of her wrong doing; for so delicate and thoughtful had Abbot's attentions ever been, that none heeded them. Her husband even was not aware of the strength which their affection had acquired. He knew they enjoyed each other's society—he saw Harrie was happy in his presence, and he was satisfied. Should she tell him her wrong, now that it was passed? Should she incur the risk of his displeasure? He might never know—it might never be known save to themselves. But Harrie's nature was noble—candid and sincere, even to a fault. She would go to him and tell him all. She would lay her head on his loving and faithful breast, and, in all humility and confidence, beg his pardon.

Does my reader think Harrie's resolution was needless, useless? that she might as well have been silent? I tell them *no*. There are natures that cannot brook concealment of any kind. If

they have wronged, even though it be but in thought, they cannot rest till acknowledgment has been made and forgiveness obtained. That sweet natures are not among the happiest, is but too true. Yet they are noble, and we can but admire them. Sincerity is a jewel to the highly prized, come under what form soever it will. If one has such a heart confided to his keeping, let him see to it that he guards it well. A word, a breath even, may chill it. Let him see that it cometh not. And did Mr. Cummings cast his wife aside? Did he bid her go and return no more? We shall see.

"And now can you, will you forgive me?" sobbed the sweet, low voice of Harrie Cummings, as she threw herself upon her husband's bosom.

One moment she was pressed there, convulsively. The strong man was deeply, painfully moved. Could he forgive *his wife* that she loved another better than himself? At this thought he pushed her, quickly, from him. But, as he did so, she looked up with such an expression of sorrow—of heartfelt agony on her pale countenance, that he drew her to him once more, and relaying her hand upon his bosom, said, "Harrie, my wife, I forgive you. It is I who have been partly in the wrong. I see it—I feel it. Henceforth it shall be the study of my life to correct it."

"Oh, no, it was I, only I," murmured Harrie, as she threw her arms caressingly about him. "You have ever been good, ever kind and loving. Alas! that I should so illy have repaid you!"

"I have been kind," continued the husband, musingly, "but have I been sufficiently thoughtful of her feelings, her extreme sensitiveness? Have I fully returned the love she had to give? No, I have not—I feel that I have not. Harrie, my wife, we have both been wrong. In the first place, I ought not to have taken such an angel to my home. I was too worldly, too earthly-minded to appreciate her. While I have been giving my affections to my business, my wife has been pining at home. And this is a fault with our sex. We take you from your home, it may be, where you have lived in a very atmosphere of love, and place you, often it is so, among entire strangers. What if we do surround you with luxuries—what if every expressed wish is gratified? May not the heart hunger and thirst still? Ay, does it not but too often do this? Men love, but not as women. With us 'tis a passion—a link in the great chain of existence. With you 'tis existence itself. Is it not thus, my wife? Have you not felt it but too keenly?"

Harrie shuddered. She could not answer him; for her own heart told her there was *one* gentleman who loved, even as did she. But *that* she

must shut out from her heart. She must no even think of it.

Mr. Cummings was, as Harrie had said, before marrying him, good, truthful and honest. He saw how his young and loving wife had been left to herself. He wondered not that she had loved when love was offered to her; and though he felt her estrangement from him—keenly felt it, he could not condemn. Noble man that he was! Were more like unto him, less wives would linger long astray. But men are too severe; ay, and women too, are thus. How little mercy is shown an erring sister! How we proudly and confidently "pass by on the other side!" Heaven grant their blood may not be required of us.

Mr. Cummings made every reparation in his power for the errors of the past. Most of his time, more of his affection, if so it could be, were given unto his wife. He made her his companion, his confidant. To her, ever, the intricacies of business became a pleasure; and her keen perceptions oftentimes saw where his own lagged. He too, took more interest in her favorite pursuits and pleasures. Gradually they come to be more like each other. Their happiness increased, and Harrie forgot, partially, that she had ever gone astray. I say *partially*; for it was too deeply woven with her nature to be ever *entirely* obliterated.

"And are you sure, Harrie," asked her sister, "that you can meet him unmoved? If not, let me entreat you to shun him. Break not again your own and your husband's happiness. Already has he suffered enough. Now let him see that his wife is strong."

"He shall!" answered Harrie, in a low, but firm voice. Whatever feelings *might* have risen in her heart when first she learned the return of Abbot Elkins, no one knew. *Now* she was calm. She would meet him thus—would show to her husband that his love and kindness were not unappreciated—not abused.

And they met—those two who had not "loved wisely but too well." It was at a party given by a mutual friend. Abbot, of course, seeing he had just returned from a three year's residence abroad, was the lion of the evening. Harrie and he were frequently side by side; but though she listened with evident pleasure to his pictures of other lands, her heart was strong. Once, and once only, was there a moment of danger. She had been led to the piano and asked for a song. It was one written by herself and set to music by Abbot during their days of mutual affection. The one who requested the song knew nothing of its history, it being merely a favorite piece of his. For a moment she hesitated. It was

but for a moment; and then, though at first her voice trembled a little, a very little, it soon became clear and firm. Once she caught Abbot's eye fixed on her, as though to read her inmost thoughts, and the color rose to her cheek. It passed, and she finished to the satisfaction of all. As she was led to a seat, Abbot moved to one beside her.

"And may I ask if Mrs. Cummings retains, unchanged, those sentiments still?" he said, with some emotion.

"Yes, but purified, exalted," was her ready answer, as she turned to him her calm and spiritual eyes. "Those were the longings and aspirations of youth. They are now re-placed by the calmer but more reasonable realities of riper years. May I ask if Mr. Elkins has not also grown wiser with the passing of time."

"Wiser, perhaps; but not so happy," answered he, with a sigh. "I would give worlds to re-call the bliss, the ecstasy of former hours. Oh, Harrie, —Mrs. Cummings, I mean—have you forgotten the past—the happy past!"

"Not forgotten," answered she, as calmly, as before. "But it is remembered only in sorrow and humiliation. Mr. Elkins himself would not wish it otherwise;" and she turned to him a look full of confidence.

It was enough. He saw her firmness, her strength, and he respected her for it. Directly the conversation turned upon other subjects, and Harrie's hour of trial was over.

"And I have met him, my sister, and was not moved. Thank heaven! I now feel safe—feel strong."

"And may you ever thus feel, my most loved Harrie," said Maria, as she drew her to her side, and imprinted a kiss upon her clear and open brow. "And may I ask if you are not happier—far happier than while yielding to wrong?"

"Happier sister! you know I am! Oh, I have such a treasure in my husband! He loves me so devotedly! How can I be otherwise than happy?" and her whole face lighted up with enthusiasm.

"Ah, ha! a tete-a-tete I have interrupted, I see," said Mr. Cummings, entering at that moment. "But so I do not mar my wife's happiness," added he, playfully caressing her, "I care not. But come, here are some drawings from which I wish you to select. You see," continued he, turning to Maria, "I am just learning to play the lover, by trying to assimilate my tastes to Harrie's. 'Tis wonderful how she has changed me, the fairy!"

## A VISIT TO AMELIA OPIE.

BY MRS. C. M. KIRKLAND.

It was my agreeable fortune, not long since, to pass a few hours in the company of a woman whose name was for years familiar to all readers in this country as well as in England—Amelia Opie—author of several novels, and particularly of a variety of shorter stories, all remarkable for sprightliness, for point, and for high moral purpose. Mrs. Opie may now be considered almost as belonging to a past age; but her keen, observant eye, her ready perception, happy turn of expression, and warm interest in the affairs and people of to-day, forbid our ranking her among things that were. She adds another proof to the truth long ago acknowledged, that mental activity and effort preserve, instead of wearying out the natural energies of body and mind. No woman of eighty who has spent her days in the inanities of fashionable life ever enjoyed such an old age as that of Mrs. Opie; no eye which has grown stony over the card-table shows such life and spirit at fourscore. A necessity for friendship, and the pleasures of social intercourse, have induced her to maintain her interest in the world around her; to make good in her circle the cruel gaps left by time and change; to seek in the affection of the young the warmth and life that maturer years are apt to lack. Her age is kindly without signs of frost. Her countenance beams with benevolent interest in those about her. Her speech is quick and lively, and she attracts young people by an unaffected sympathy. Her society is sought in the best company in London, which is the best in the world. She enjoys what Sir Walter Scott reckoned the most precious advantage of success in literature—the introduction it secures to whatever of eminence and excellence is to be found anywhere.

This is in Mrs. Opie's case the just reward of an unquestionable devotion to the cause of human improvement. Before Amelia Opie had probably formed any very definite idea on the subject—for her first novels, *The Mother and Daughter* and *The Father and Daughter* were written, as we understand, in early youth—there seems to have been an instinct for good in her mind. With no obtruded moral, her tales carried with them the highest and most effective teaching. Perhaps no story ever spoke more powerfully to the minds of romantic young people than *Adeline Mowbray*; or, *The Mother and Daughter*; and though this

novel, which charmed our mothers and grand-mothers, might appear a little old-fashioned in style at the present day of lightning and steam literature, we will venture to place it, in point of real interest—interest founded upon what is universal in human nature—for before most of those which now shoot up so alarmingly week by week, throwing a momentary radiance around, or making life look ghastly in the light of their unnatural blue fire. Mrs. Opie's tales differed from most of the novels of her day in being the result of observation sharpened by a strong and keen moral sense. They were not made to sell, but to be read, and that with advantage. We will engage that she never even thought of the taste of the age; what would be popular; what *school* she belonged to; or what class of readers would be taken with her stories. She wrote from within, and with a general and a sincere purpose, and she has her reward.

Mrs. Opie's shorter stories are still more interesting and attractive than her novels, because the interest is more condensed, and the points of the narrative more rapidly evolved. They exhibit an equal knowledge of the springs of action, and an improved acquaintance with society. They embrace a great variety of themes, and treat all with vivacity and cleverness. If not profound, Mrs. Opie is always sensible. When sentimental she is not flat; in moralizing seldom prosy. She makes her characters tell their story, and obtrudes the author very little upon the reader. Her men and women are alive, and act for themselves, not puppets whose strings we are all the time catching glimpses of. She has the art of exciting our sympathies, making our eyes overflow with pity or joy, without leaving us with a feeling of restraint afterward. This is high praise, when we examine it; for who has not felt angry both with himself and the writer of the story which surprised him into emotion? The secret seems to be in the use of materials. There is a cheap way of making any reader's heart ache, by dwelling upon a suffering or dying scene for instance; recounting all the particulars, in such a way as to bring to memory every scene of distress we have ever witnessed; and all this with the express and sole purpose of making us cry! This is an insult and an injury, and we resent it as such. But it is a quite different matter when

in the course of a story artistically wrought up to a crisis, it becomes necessary for the grand result that the reader's heart should be touched, in order that he may sympathize with virtuous joy, look upon the wretched consequences of vice with an approving pity, or draw from the pictured conduct of another, lessons for his own life, made more impressive by the irrepressible gush of feeling. This requires power and skill, and our hearts pardon the pain for which we see a reason. The tears we shed over Mrs. Opie's stories are not purposeless.

But of all the instructive hints Mrs. Opie ever gave, those on the subject of lying have been most useful, perhaps because they were most needed. She attacked this universal vice with a boldness which caused a most conscious flutter among careless talkers. To call it a universal vice may at first blush seem harsh and unjustifiable; but when we fairly think how difficult a matter it is to speak the truth about common things in common talk, the strength of the expression may perhaps be pardoned. Truth, like other precious things, asks care and sacrifice, and these are not always present with us in the excitement of conversation. If a severer test were applied to our daily words, it might be discovered, to our horror, that we scarcely ever repeat a thing twice without altering it; that we carelessly depart from strict truth in describing a common occurrence; that we can hardly tell anything that concerns a person whom we dislike without warping it; that when we would gloss over our own conduct or that of one whom we love, we can hardly help lying outright. To Mrs. Opie belongs the great credit of having first called the thing by its right name. While the matter was minced, we could all find shelter somewhere, for fine words often veil us to ourselves; but when that keen observer not only ventured to talk about lying to "ears polite," but showed what lying was and what was lying, there was hardly anybody that did not blush and own up. Not content with racy and pointed disquisitions upon the different phases of this almost inevitable vice, she embodied it in young ladies and gentlemen, and old ones too; made

them bring themselves out; laid bare their motives, raked up and brought to light all the devices of the craft; showed its sure-following humiliation; and while she made the reader rejoice at the due punishment of lying, brought up before him all his own sins of the same sort, conscience all the while accusing or excusing, and bearing testimony to the power and truth of the writer.

This was a great triumph—a something to be proud of for life. The whole reading world came voluntarily to the confessional, and by acclamation accepted the mortifying imputations of Mrs. Opie. Nobody said these delineations are absurd—unnatural; nobody dared to say so. The most rigid owned their truth with the most thoughtless. The fastidious who quarrelled with the plain words used, asked only that the phraseology might be softened; they never denied the facts. They felt that under the shelter of certain deceptive emphuisms they were as guilty as their neighbors, though their delicacy asked to be told of it gently. Sturdy, straight-forward moralists hailed a new ally, and those who had in their haste said that all novels were lies, now made an exception in favor of those written as illustrations of lying. It was really amusing to witness how everybody caught at a lesson which might naturally be expected to prove very unpalatable. The world did itself credit.

Mrs. Opie has been looked up to as a benefactor ever since. I really wondered, as I observed her quiet, modest demeanor, whether she carried about with her a consciousness of the sensation she had produced—the good she had done. We are sometimes great without knowing it, and truly this seems to be the case with Amelia Opie; for less assumption or arrogance was never seen in a successful author. The placid countenance suits well, in spite of its vivacious and quick-moving eyes, with the plain Quaker cap, the gown of drab satin, and the snow-white silken shawl. It must be confessed that the only hint of Quakerism lay in these soft colors; the fabrics might, for richness, have belonged to the Duchess of Sutherland. But who is consistent?

## GETTING INTO PRACTICE.

BY MISS ELLA RODMAN.

It was a pleasant room, a pleasant fire, and a pleasant party. The warm curtains effectually excluded the cold, wintry wind, that moaned and whistled without, as though angry that it could not effect an entrance; and the bright glow from the coal-fire threw a cheerful light upon the faces of those assembled around it. It was an apartment into which the weary, wet, and uncomfortable foot-passenger gazes with a feeling of envy, and thinks, as he stands flattening his nose against the window-pane, and almost hears the hissing of the tea-urn, as he sees the smoke curl gracefully upward from cakes that seem to say "come and eat us," that he would not sit so quietly indifferent in the presence of comforts which he can only devour with his eyes. At last he begins to admire the *sang froid*, which he doubts not is all assumed, with which the favorites of fortune regard the good things before them; and walks off with a hopeless sigh to contemplate some other scene of comfort.

But it is now quite time to present the company; and if precedence be yielded to size and seniority, old Mr. Lorimer must certainly have the preference, as he sits there puffing and blowing in his comfortable arm-chair like some huge porpoise. He is the possessor of a splendid mansion, an elegant carriage, a pair of horses, and a beautiful daughter. With respect to character, he is easy, good-natured, and not overburdened with intellectuality; having acquired a fortune in Wall street, he has not many ideas beyond that region, and now eats, and drinks, and goes to sleep, to indemnify himself for former industry.

Helen Lorimer is very pretty, very polite, and rather—what shall I say instead of coquettish? As Mrs. Chick observes, I must "make an effort," for that sounds almost too harsh. If she had been a milliner's apprentice, she would probably have been termed something of a flirt; but the heiress-expectant of three hundred thousand was only called "a little mischievous." As a redeeming point, however, she was really affectionate and attentive to her father, and quite capable of appreciating the fine talents and well-stored mind of a certain young gentleman who will shortly make his appearance—being now

very much in love—although she tries to conceal it by tormenting him most sadly.

A figure considerably resembling whalebone animated with a little life, and looking as though it never could, would, or did bend, or move at all, except straight-forward, or straight around, occupied a seat on the sofa beside Helen. With a face to correspond, the whole constituted a person most important in his own estimation—Mr. Elilm Kivers, M. D. He never forgave any one who left out the M. D.; it was, as he modestly informed a friend, the setting of the jewel, and its omission left his dignity in a very unsupported state. No one could accuse him of being either childish or boyish in appearance. Not much the junior of Mr. Lorimer, he yet retained an exalted idea of his own attractions; and it was only a feeling of indecision as to who was most worthy of such a reward that made him so long single. He was now employed in analyzing the character of Helen Lorimer, previous to conferring upon her the title of Mrs. Elilm Kivers, M. D. If she was silent, he stared at her with all the pertinacity of a bad portrait. If she spoke, he listened attentively, and when her observations pleased him, looked quite benign and approving; but when they did not, and this was quite often, he contracted his brows in a manner dreadful to behold—a performance which Helen, with the most unparalleled temerity, viewed with the greatest amusement. He was a mean man—you could tell that by a glance at his lower extremities, for which his nether garments were always too short by several inches. He had in some degree fixed his choice upon Helen;—in the first place, because her father was rich—secondly, she was an only child, and he should not therefore be troubled with his wife's relations—and thirdly, she was young, and the misguided man supposed that he could mould her according to his will. He really deserved to have her for a punishment; she would have teased his very life out.

He was not at all certain, however; he had not yet made up his mind—he would think the matter over. Helen, he could plainly see, was only waiting for his proposal; if he but opened his lips on the subject she might snap him up so

suddenly that he would scarcely have time to breathe before he found himself transformed from a saleable investment, on which all were casting admiring eyes, into private property claimed by a single individual. So he thought, and frowned, and considered; while Helen rattled away as usual, and troubled herself very little about him.

On her other side sat another M. D., between whom and his senior there could scarcely have been a greater contrast. Henry Wallis was a fine-looking young man, high-spirited, talented, and *poor*; he was still at the outset of his professional career, having spent several years in getting into practice—a step which yet remained to be accomplished; and between him and his brother M. D. there existed quite an unconscious rivalry—the elder doctor, glancing with eyes of envy at the face and figure of the young one, and the junior longing in vain for the extended practice of the senior. Brilliant in conversation, with a certain joyousness of manner, and deferential regard to the opinions of others, Wallis was a universal favorite; one of these whom every one wishes well, and is very sorry for, and quite willing that some one else shall help along—nay, they would be quite rejoiced at the prospect, and really think of calling some one to account for not doing so.

He was evidently a favorite with Mr. Lorimer; not with any views toward his daughter, however, for the old gentleman was not very clear-sighted, and supposed that the two candidates came expressly to see him; he would even have been surprised had any one enlightened him on the subject—forgetting that he generally went to sleep during their visits, and that his conversation could not, therefore, be either edifying or very amusing. The young physician had lately sank several degrees in the estimation of the matter-of-fact financier in consequence of some lines written in Helen's album, which breathed a request not to forget him, though far away from love and her. Mr. Lorimer had a hobby, and that was the putting down of poetry and sentiment; people who made a fortune by their literary labors were regarded by him as no better than those who force an entrance through bolted doors and windows, instead of entering a house in the usual manner. Once mounted on his hobby he struck right and left without discrimination. He and Wallis were now engaged in an animated discussion of poetry, in which the old gentleman assumed the character of complainant, and Wallis that of the defendant—the latter endeavoring to protect his favorite from the crushing hammer of his antagonist.

"Pooh!" said Mr. Lorimer, "a man has

enough to do attend to his business: he should leave poetry to boarding-school Misses."

"No insinuations, papa," said Helen, "I was once a boarding-school Miss myself; and a most devout admirer of Moore;" and then, turning mischievously to Doctor Kivers, she said—"don't you love poetry, doctor? I should so like to hear you repeat some."

As well might she have fancied a bear gliding gracefully through the steps of a minuet, or a peacock sending forth melodious strains, as to imagine Doctor Kivers repeating poetry. But she knew this.

"Well," she continued, "if you will not begin, I shall set you the example. I believe this went the rounds of all the albums in school—but no matter, it is all I can remember at present. Is it not beautiful?"

"Oh! ever thus from childhood's hour,  
I've seen my fondest hopes decay,  
I never loved a tree or flower,  
But 'twas the first to fade away:  
I never nursed a dear gazelle,  
To glad me with its soft black eye,  
But when it came to know me well,  
And love me, it was sure to die!"

"Very well," growled the doctor, "but doubtless an imitation of—

"I never had a slice of bread,  
Particularly nice and wide,  
But fell upon the sanded floor,  
And always on the buttered side!"

This resemblance to Fadladeen, the critic chamberlain of Lillah Rookh, struck both Helen and Wallis as so particularly strong, that they were immediately seized with a fit of laughter. It was his very air and manner as they could imagine it; and they found it almost impossible to resume their gravity, while the doctor's countenance grew blacker and blacker.

"I never had the least patience," burst forth the old gentleman, "with people who can spend their time in rhyming hour and bower, thee and see, or any other words. Just tell me one thing, young man," continued he, addressing Wallis, with the air of one who wields a powerful argument, "did poetry and sentiment ever yet put money in a man's pocket, bread in his mouth, or clothes on his back? I mean any one that you know of—yourself or any of your acquaintances—for I do not believe these fairy tales about the old writers. Answer me that, will you?"

Poor Wallis could scarcely speak from experience; it had certainly conveyed very little of these woeful articles to him; but he answered as well as he could for the reputation of the art.

"A great many of our poets," said he, "have risen from poverty to eminence and wealth, and literature among us daily meets with more success

and encouragement. A poet is too much occupied in giving utterance to his high and ennobling thoughts to trouble himself about these things. His country will provide for him."

"*His country!*" exclaimed Mr. Lorimer, almost afraid that his own pockets would suffer, and regarding the young man with gathering distrust, "the country, I hope, has more sense than to provide for such a lazy, good-for-nothing set! This is just the way with your poets; you will sit scribbling away with an empty larder, sleeves out at elbows, and call this trusting to Providence! A poor, miserable, moping set, who looking down from their eminence, the garret, abuse and rail against the rest of the world, because they have not money enough to enjoy it! One thing I hope," he continued warmly, "that is, that no daughter of mine will ever marry a poet, or she may find to her cost that she has made a poor bargain—better to take up with a bricklayer."

Wallis glanced toward Helen, hoping that she would come to the rescue; but she only smiled and remained perversely silent, while Mr. Lorimer concluded the argument by going to sleep.

His slumber continued unbroken even by his daughter's melody, who, having been led to the piano by her two admirers, watched them with the greatest amusement as they stood quarrelling who should turn over the leaves. The controversy at length came to an end by the elder doctor's retiring with dignity to the background; and to console him for his defeat, Helen inquired, with one of her sweetest smiles, what song he would prefer.

While Mr. Kivers, M. D., was employed in considering—for all his proceedings were well-weighed beforehand, being thought by him to have considerable influence on the fate of the nation—she exclaimed suddenly—"oh! I know what you will like—here is the very thing!" and before the astonished gentleman could express his disapprobation, she had rattled through with:

"Oh! my wife's a little bit young thing,  
She won't be ruled by me!"

Doctor Kivers began to fear that his dignity would suffer in such company, and very soon took his departure; rewarding Helen's song with a shower of his darkest frowns and most withering looks.

For a few moments after his exit there was an entire silence in the apartment, broken only by certain sounds, not of the most musical description, which issued from the well-filled arm-chair. Wallis glanced toward Mr. Lorimer; his eyes were shut, his mouth open, and his hands clasped together; he was evidently in the full enjoyment

of a refreshing slumber; then bending closer to his companion, he sighed in a low tone—"Helen, I wish you were poor."

"Indeed!" she replied, in the same tone, lifting her bright, saucy eyes to his—"I am infinitely obliged to you, Mr. Wallis—that is quite of a piece with your usual compliments!"

"Helen!" said he, more earnestly, "do put aside teasing for to-night at least—might I not dare to hope?"

"The effrontery of some people is really surprising," rejoined the lady; "first, you wish I was poor, and then ask if you may hope! Hope what? That I will be poor? I do not agree with you in the least, for I heartily despise poverty and all its attendant evils. Miss Lorimer the heiress, and Helen Lorimer without a cent, would be two very different people, and meet with two very different fates."

In answer to the question, Wallis began for the fiftieth time a story, to which Helen abruptly put an end by dropping a heavy music-book, purposely, he thought, and Mr. Lorimer suddenly sat up wide awake in his chair.

"Bless me, Helen!" exclaimed her father, "what are you doing up at this hour, child? Eleven o'clock, I declare! Young man, it is too late for you to be out visiting, unless you intend to stay all night. I am always very happy to see my friends come, and very happy to see them go—when it is time."

Wallis merely smiled, as he rose to go, without the least thought of being offended by this unceremonious dismissal; it was the old gentleman's way—he would do as he pleased—and people must either take him as they found him or not take him at all.

"Good night, sir," said he, laughing, "I wish you pleasant dreams and a more lenient feeling toward poets."

Mr. Lorimer growled something in reply not very complimentary to the fraternity; and Wallis followed the example of Doctor Kivers—pondering, as he went, on his rather forlorn prospects, and very much disposed in favor of the law of equal rights with respect to property.

He reached his lodgings and retired to bed; his mind filled with visions of future greatness and schemes for his advancement, intermingled with pictures of stern reality,

"And shapeless sights came wandering by—  
The ghostly people of the realm of dream."

The figure of his landlady rose up before him, stern as the image of Minerva, grasping in one hand a long, unpaid bill, with the usual complaint of being a "lone woman;" the washer-woman, with an urgent petition for instant

payment, and the additional recommendation of "five small children;" and the tailor, because he *was* a tailor, and tailors are always cheated. Then came a pleasanter vision of various night-capped heads, making wry faces over doses of rhubarb, calomel and quinine; all following his directions, and turning to him true as the needle to the pole. A still more exciting tableau followed—first, there was a falling, scrabbling, and confusion; people ran here and there, tumbled over each other, and called for everything at once, while Helen stood wringing her hands, the very image of despair—Mr. Lorimer had been seized with a fit of apoplexy, and no hopes were entertained of his life. The second act opened in a carefully-shrouded bed-room, where his patient lay extended in insensibility—himself the presiding genius standing near the bed to watch the effect of his prescription—while Helen glided softly about like an angel of light, every now and then casting on him a look of the most intense gratitude. His final scene was a bridal party, in which Helen, more resplendent than ever in her white lace dress and flowing veil, stood by his side, while old Mr. Lorimer actually danced about in the fulness of his joy.

But alas! all things have an end, and so did his dreams; the bright sunshine came streaming in his window, and found him just where he was before. With a heavy heart he proceeded to his office, to go through with the daily ceremony of sitting there in a state of the most blissful repose, waiting for a call. A very distinct sign had for some time past informed people that Henry Wallis, M. D., was to be found within at almost any hour; but they blindly refused to be guided to the right place, and passed on in total disregard of the information. So he sat and poetized in hopeless despondency; few ever came except those who were too poor to pay, and he began to have serious thoughts of getting his name into the newspapers by almost any possible means. Notoriety of some kind, good or bad, was better than none, and he wondered if it would not be a profitable speculation to hire some one to post him up as a bank-defaulter, forger, or escaped felon. He had no relations that he knew of, except distant ones, and with the greatest avidity he daily perused the advertisements in the newspapers, where fortunate people are requested to go somewhere and hear of something to their advantage. He was quite anxious to hear of something to his advantage, but no one ever made the request; no one ever died and left him anything, or desired any information respecting him. To prevent the lock of his office-door from becoming actually rusty, he

was obliged to go in and out a great many times himself, and as time passed on and no gleam of a better prospect became visible, he was almost ready to give up in despair.

It is a well-known fact that the inhabitants of the good city of Gotham are ever on the *qui vive* for something strange, horrible, or exciting. Every transaction is rendered into an event of the utmost importance, and all the posts and fences around are filled with accounts of thrilling murders, mysterious disappearances, and exciting developments.

It was just after the holidays, and the Christmas and New Year's festivities being over, the public mind was in state of listless apathy, longing for some unprecedented event to take place, and ready to seize upon anything that promised to afford excitement, when suddenly a placard appeared, which threw the whole place into commotion. People began to collect, first in single numbers, and then in crowds, about the different corners and posts; and round faces grew long, and long faces grew longer while perusing the startling intelligence which the placard announced. "Mysterious disappearance of Doctor Wallis!" these placards were headed, and adorned with exclamation points innumerable. They stated, to the horror of all, that this talented young physician, at the very head of his profession, had mysteriously disappeared on the afternoon of Friday last, mourned and regretted by a large circle of friends and acquaintances. That whether he had been privately murdered at his office and the body concealed, or enticed away by thieves, it was impossible to say; but that the most indefatigable exertions would be made for his discovery, and retributive justice would certainly fall on the heads of those who had committed the deed.

People began to discover his virtues all at once. "Blessings brighten as they leave us," and now that Doctor Wallis had actually disappeared, there sprung up such an extensive circle of friends and admirers, that could his shade but have scanned the assemblage, it would have been filled with wonder and astonishment. No one inquired who Doctor Wallis was, nor made the least insinuation that this excitement about one who had glided along so quietly and unnoticed, was at all surprising; everybody knew him, of course, since not to do so was to argue themselves unknown—and a few easy minds actually succeeded in persuading themselves that they had been among the most intimate friends of the deceased.

Mr. Lorimer entered the drawing-room one evening, where sat Helen, teasing Dr. Kivers and

exchanging sallies with her other lovers, as usual, and unfolding a newspaper in his hand, proceeded to read, in a grave tone, an account of the suspicious disappearance and supposed murder of the promising young physician, Doctor Wallis. Helen had risen from her seat and crept close to his side as he told them he had bad news, and he was proceeding to enter into the details, when a heavy fall sounded on his ear, and turning, he beheld his daughter lifeless at his feet.

At the dreadful announcement, poor Helen could no longer control her feelings, and severely was she now punished for all the pain her capricious conduct had inflicted on her lover. Doctor Kivers, moving rather more quickly than usual, raised her speedily from the floor, and she was immediately conveyed to her apartment, where she recovered at length from her stupor; but fever and delirium followed. Mr. Lorimer had not even suspected the state of his daughter's feelings; he had never thought of Wallis in the light of a lover, and began to fear that he had been too harsh with the young man. Perhaps it was his own condemnation of his poetical fancy which had led to this, or perhaps his manner toward him had been particularly discouraging. The good-natured old man blamed himself exceedingly. Had he supposed that Helen cared at all for him, or he for Helen, how differently he would have treated him! No one became more interested in the newspapers than Mr. Lorimer; he eagerly pursued every point of the case, and looked in vain for any hopes of his discovery.

The other lovers, observing that "Wallis was a fortunate fellow, if he *had* been murdered," took their departure, in a very disconsolate manner; and Doctor Kivers, as he attended to his patient, had the pleasure of hearing his rival's name coupled with epithets of love and tenderness. Probably this discovery had something to do with the many nauseous doses which poor Helen was obliged to swallow, any scruples or expressions of unwillingness being entirely put to flight by the entreaties of her father, and the grave, warning looks of Doctor Kivers, who continually threatened them that he could not answer for the consequences—perhaps taking this mode of revenging himself for the various teasings he had undergone at the hands of his patient.

In the meantime the public excitement continued, gathering strength with each succeeding day. A stranger would have supposed that the disappearance of this young, patientless physician, involved the welfare of the whole community. The name was sounded in all quarters of the city; rewards were offered for his discovery by the public authorities, and every part of his

office and lodging was thoroughly searched. The pale, trembling landlady, almost feared a charge of murder in consequence of his being in her debt; and assisted in the search with eager zeal. His apartments looked like a place that had been sacked by thieves. Every powder that could be discovered was carefully analyzed to see if it contained poison of any description, every drawer and shelf were explored for fire-arms, or other instruments of death, and his papers were all ransacked, to discover, if possible, some evidence of an intention to commit suicide. Nothing of the kind appeared, therefore it was clear that he could not have put an end to his own life; a murder must have been committed, and they proceeded to search the office with renewed diligence. A few drops of blood were visible on the floor, and they immediately took every board up in hopes of discovering a clue to the mystery, but nothing rewarded their labors, except a few dead cats and some broken crockery.

The directors rubbed their foreheads and looked puzzled; there ought to be a coroner's inquest, that was clear, but how in the world could there be if there was nothing to sit on? The landlady, supposing that the difficulty lay in the numbers that would assemble, mildly suggested that people should not be particular at such times, and if chairs were scarce, perhaps they could be accommodated with stools. But the good woman was immediately frowned down by the committee; and being determined, since they could not hold an inquest, at least to get up a trial, they began to look around for a person who might be seized and committed on suspicion. All who were charged with any misdemeanor were suspected of being accessories at least, and immediately locked up until others could be procured, whose guilt was not even doubtful. By means of the offered rewards the inmates of the prison increased to a surprising degree, and they hardly knew how to dispose of all the offenders thus placed in their charge. It was clear that few could have known Doctor Wallis, to suppose him such a Hercules as to require a multitude to despatch him, notwithstanding the number of his warm friends and admirers. Still, very little light was thrown upon the affair; all that they could ascertain with certainty was the fact that he had been murdered; and this they knew very well before. His landlady viewed with harrowed feelings the sacking of her house, and resolved, in future, to stipulate beforehand with her lodgers, that they should neither disappear nor put an end to themselves.

Doctor Kivers was very much surprised, both at Wallis' disappearance and the sensation it

created; he thought that even his own murder could not be an event of greater interest, and wondered if it would elicit as much. Dead or alive, Wallis seemed destined to be his rival.

Helen Lorimer recovered after a long and tedious illness, but she was no longer the gay, capricious coquette she had been. Her host of lovers diminished very materially after the evidence which she afforded them of her pre-occupied affections, and there were now scarcely any who deserved the name, except Doctor Kivers, who, looking quite approvingly upon the change in her manner, began to think that he might yet confer upon her the title of Mrs. Kivers, of course taking it for granted that she would forget all about Wallis in the superior pleasure of his attentions. Helen no longer teased him—she had not sufficient energy—she passively endured him; and her rather ancient lover sometimes thought, as he observed her pale cheek and drooping eyelids, what a pity it was that she did not know how near she was to happiness. But still, he could not make up his mind to commit himself quite yet—he must first ascertain whether Mr. Lorimer's money was invested in a prudent manner—it would be no joke to marry an heiress, and find himself with a penniless wife; and as the old gentleman owned real estate, and bank stock, and mortgages, and almost everything in which money could be invested, this was a proceeding that required consideration.

Mr. Lorimer, in the full spirit of contrition for his various slanders against poetry, in his controversies with Wallis, now swallowed whole volumes of it; and by dint of considerable trying, and a great deal of perseverance, he became quite a devoted admirer. Moore, Byron, Scott, Thompson and Spencer no longer reposed idly in his book-case, in their splendid bindings, for one of his greatest pleasures was to have Helen read to him from the very books he had formerly abused. Helen sometimes smiled at, on glancing up in the midst of a touching passage, she beheld her father indulging in a comfortable nap; but this transient smile soon passed away, as she sunk into a sad and mournful reverie.

But it is now high time to see what became of Wallis. Our hero was seated in his office, in a more disconsolate mood than usual, glancing sadly from the window on passers-by, and wondering if people ever would discover and bring to light the genius which had languished so long in obscurity. One passed, and another passed, but no patient fell into his eager hands, and he was more aggravated than ever by the stupidity of a messenger, who after raising his hopes from the sea of despair, remembered that he had been

sent in quest of Doctor Stebbins—not Doctor Wallis. Politely wishing Doctor Stebbins a change of residence, though whether it would have been an improvement upon his present mode of living, is, at the best, exceedingly doubtful, he sunk into a sullen reverie, and for some time thought of—nothing.

He was aroused by a man entering in breathless haste, who handed him an open letter, at the same time entreating him to hurry, as he had received express commands to bring him as soon as possible. Wallis glanced at the plain, comfortable-looking conveyance that stood before his window, and then applied himself diligently to the perusal of the letter. It had evidently been written by several different persons, and Wallis grew more and more surprised as he proceeded with the contents.

To account for his astonishment it is necessary to make some explanations. Wallis' great-uncle, on the mother's side, had been a gentleman of independent property, who at his death bequeathed it all to an only child, a daughter, without providing in the least for his widowed sister. This sister, Wallis' grandmother, took up her residence in the city, and the family never had the least intercourse or correspondence with the orphan heiress. She was a beauty, a wit, and a fortune; for twenty years she reigned in society an undisputed star—the most dashing belle in the whole state. At the end of that time she found herself a widow without children. The property was considerably wasted by the excesses of a dissipated husband, and although still wealthy she retired to the solitude of Wellworth Manor—the family country-seat—on the banks of the Hudson. Wallis' mother and grandmother had ceased to regard the property as ever likely to come into their possession, and scarcely ever mentioned Mrs. Derrickson's name, but reports, which from time to time reached them, represented her as extremely eccentric, and wholly under the influence of her husband's daughter, and an artful house-keeper. This Eleanor Derrickson had suddenly left her, having quarrelled both with her mother-in-law and the house-keeper; and Mrs. Derrickson, having been seized with a severe fit of illness, was now lying on what promised to be a bed of death. Having contrived to clude the Argus eyes of her duenna, the house-keeper, she commenced writing a letter to Wallis, in which she was assisted by two or three friends, who had gathered round her in her sickness. She began to see the injustice of her father's will in heaping all upon one, while another suffered for what she had often thrown away in acts of extravagance; and prompted by

a desire to mortify Eleanor, and disappoint the house-keeper, and also to keep the property in the family, she wrote to Wallis, requesting him to come, without a moment's delay, if he wished to behold her alive.

The idea of seeing this unknown and eccentric relative, and the prospect of becoming the possessor of Wellworth Manor, almost deprived Wallis of the use of his senses, and he stood quite bewildered. The messenger, reminding him of the distance to be accomplished, prevented his making any preparations, by seizing him and placing him in the carriage, almost by bodily force, and with his thoughts in a very unsettled state, Wallis found himself borne rapidly along toward Wellworth Manor. The journey consumed several hours, and the shades of twilight were deepening around as the mansion at length rose before him, almost buried in the thick trees that formed a complete grove around it. The appearance of the place was extremely imposing, and Wallis, as he proceeded up the avenue, began to think that fortune had smiled upon him at last.

He was immediately led to the apartment of Mrs. Derrickson, who appeared quite overcome at the sight of him, dwelt on his great resemblance to her aunt, and entreated him not to sell the Manor, which would soon be his. Wallis, much affected, gave the required promise, and she lay for some time, holding his hand in hers, and gazing upon him with love and confidence. The house-keeper frowned darkly upon the young man and wished him anywhere else, but the other servants were quite rejoiced—and to provoke the house-keeper, who tyrannized over them all, and also in consideration of his being the future master, they paid him every attention in their power.

But Mrs. Derrickson lingered on from day to day. Wallis spent his time alternately in the chamber of the sick woman, and rambling about the vicinity, where, seated on some picturesque knoll, amid the beautiful scenery of Wellworth Manor, he remained wrapt in bright dreams of the future, in which Helen Lorimer bore a conspicuous part—totally unconscious of the hue and cry which attended his mysterious disappearance at home.

His landlady had waited in some alarm for his regular nightly appearance, and as he neither came himself nor sent any message, she concluded, after the lapse of two or three days, that he must have been despatched in some mysterious manner; as she was quite aware that he had no relations—and thought proper to mention her suspicions, so that in a short time the flame was

kindled. Wellworth Manor was almost as retired as a nunnery; no information of the excitement about him ever reached Wallis, and he still continued in blissful ignorance.

Mrs. Derrickson lived four weeks after his arrival; he had the pleasant reflection of having done all that he could to alleviate her sufferings, and at a decent time after her funeral, the will was opened and read. Wallis started, suddenly, as the first words were pronounced, and before it was concluded he saw all his glittering fancies dashed to the ground. Mrs. Derrickson had almost entirely lost her memory after her first attack; she forgot every circumstance of her will, and the necessity of making another, and Wallis now heard Wellworth Manor, which he had already regarded as his, and for which he had projected so many improvements, named as the property of the very Eleanor Derrickson who had so abused her mother-in-law's kindness. A handsome provision was made for the house-keeper, and there only remained about ten thousand dollars, which descended to Wallis by the right of inheritance.

The triumph of the house-keeper was complete; Eleanor Derrickson returned as mistress of the establishment—and poor Wallis, after a solitary ramble about the grounds, prepared for his departure from the place which had passed into the hands of another. Sad at heart, he traversed again the road over which he had passed before with such different feelings and gloomy hopes. True, he was now the possessor of ten thousand dollars—quite a fortune in his circumstances—but he had so long buoyed himself up with the possession of Wellworth Manor, in which he hoped one day to instal Helen as mistress, that the disappointment was most acute. He could now scarcely hope to obtain the heiress' hand; but resolving to acquaint them immediately with his misfortunes, he proceeded to Mr. Lorimer's.

As he passed along, his astonishment may be imagined on reading accounts of his own mysterious disappearance and probable murder. He supposed at first that it might be another Doctor Wallis—but his office, the place of residence, and every circumstance connected with him, were so minutely described that there could be no doubt of his being the person referred to. Almost like a man in a dream, he reached the well-known house, and pulled the bell with nervous haste.

The black servant man fled in precipitation to the parlor, spreading the news that "Massa Wallis' murdered ghost was ringing at de door." Mr. Lorimer rose up in a state of the greatest excitement, Doctor Kivers could scarcely believe the

evidence of his own eyes, and Helen, foolish girl! again sunk—not to the floor—but into the hands of Wallis; at which spectacle the senior M. D. concluded that it was time to take his departure.

"Where, in the name of all that's wonderful, have you been?" ejaculated Mr. Lorimer, "and so you are not murdered after all, eh? Very obliging of you considering the sensation you have created."

Helen was by this time quite restored to her senses, and not knowing what better to do, burst into a fit of crying. Wallis began a relation of his adventure; but when he came to the unexpected bestowal of Wellworth Manor, the indignation of the old gentleman was irrepressible. To think that the "good-for-nothing baggage," as he termed Eleanor Derrickson, should get the place after all, was really too much! He concluded "that, if it would be anything of a consolation, he had a troublesome piece of goods which he had wanted to get rid of for sometime past, and perhaps——"

Quite forgetting that he could ring the bell, Mr. Lorimer murmured something about looking up the newspaper and departed. After two fainting fits, a siege of illness, and a hearty crying spell, all on his own private and particular account, Helen could no longer return to her old habits, and feign a total indifference in the welfare of her lover. By the time Mr. Lorimer returned, Wallis was quite satisfied, and began to think that his trials were ended.

Public enthusiasm was still at its height, when the object of their interest suddenly returned, and presented himself before them a living man. The community felt grieved and defrauded—they had not expected this of him; any private individual among them would have been deeply shocked on being told that he actually wished his death—but they considered themselves not well treated by his coming thus unexpectedly to light. How much

more thrilling it would have sounded to announce that the body of the unfortunate victim had been discovered; but to say that he had come back himself, asserting that he had never been dead, and therefore showing that their excitement had been but a false bubble, which suddenly bursting, left them overcome with confusion, was extremely mortifying.

But notoriety is certainly a great thing to help a person on in the world; every one felt a curiosity to behold the young doctor who had excited such an interest, and sent for him on the least pretence, and often on no pretence at all; but people were not satisfied with seeing him once, and he soon had more patients than he could very well attend to. Helen, considering that she was an heiress, came in for a considerable share of abuse for thus appropriating Wallis to herself; it was really scandalous that such a nice young doctor should be engaged!

On their wedding day, Mr. Lorimer placed a paper in Wallis' hands, who, on glancing at it, was quite overcome. It was a deed of possession for Wellworth Manor. This scheme had floated in the old gentleman's mind ever since he became acquainted with Wallis' disappointment; and, keeping it a profound secret, he made a journey as soon as possible to inspect the state of the case. It was even so. The property really belonged to Eleanor Derrickson; but not having the least attachment for the place, a good sum of ready money was infinitely more acceptable in her eyes, and Mr. Lorimer returned in a state of successful delight.

Doctor Kivers married his house-keeper just before the wedding, pretending that he had never thought of having any one else; and Wallis, to his great delight, realized his cherished dream of establishing Helen as mistress of Wellworth Manor.

## OUR LILLIE.

## A SKETCH FROM OUR VILLAGE.

BY LUCY PRIMROSE.

THERE is many a pretty village in this great world, but you might search it over and find never a prettier than ours, nestled so lovingly among the greenest of all green hills, and by the purest of all pure mountain streams. A few years ago at least, canals and rail-roads, telegraphs and balloons, those killers of all quietly vegetating individuality had never disturbed its peacefulness, and there were dwellers there with individual living hearts, keeping time to their own individual heart-music; but none of them all kept such sweet, merry time, as did our Lillie's.

Away down at the end of the shaded street, furthest from tavern and stores, stood a cosy stone cottage half buried in its heritage of flowers. The roses put their delicate buds tremblingly over the white palings, as if seeking to bless a wider world with their fragrance, while the grey arms of the old elms that shed their greenness over the mossy roof, were starry with the blossoms which clambered through them. It was a fit abode for loving hearts, and they dwelt there. No one could see Mr. and Mrs. Gray sitting quietly together in their flower-wreathed portico in the twilight of a summer eve, and not feel that they were to each other a hundred, and a hundred times dearer, now that time was threading their looks with silver, than they were on their wedding day, though there was not a girl in the village who had not heard her mother tell how they had married in early youth, with no dowry but their own loving hearts and willing hands; and now with those hearts beating youthfully and joyously as ever, they dwelt in their pleasant homestead.

Their only child, their one son, had been many years married, and dwelt with his growing family in the busiest spot our street could boast; but his oldest daughter, his parents claimed as theirs, and so in that soft, love atmosphere, among the flowers and bird-music of their cottage home, our Lillie had grown to be sweet sixteen.

Opposite the cottage, towered a new, red brick house, with bright shutters, and marble steps, and a yard all shaven and shorn in trim, square plots, bordered with straight, symmetrical lines

of shrubbery, growing spruce and precise as if conscious of innate respectability; while the great Newfoundland dog turned the sharp corners and paced up the glaring, gravel walks, as if he had never been a foolish, frolicsome bantling in all his life. Then there was a stylish, modern knocker, with a plate above it, bearing in ostentatious flourishes the name of "Gustavus Augustus Squibbs, Esq.," all of new sparkling brass, staring out in that rural street like a hedge-hog in a rose-bush; so when strangers *did* come to our village, they always asked—"who lived there?"

What could have induced Lawyer Gustavus Augustus Squibbs, when an unexpected inheritance enabled him to retire from the show of business, to select our modest, little, unpretending nook for his Arcadia, I never could divine. It was not its romantic beauty, he did his best to spoil that—reader, it was, and is—a great mystery! But his advent did make some sensation, and one or two doors which had been content to be humble and pretty all their lives, mounted the brass knockers, though they were half hidden among the leafy vines; and the unsophisticated sheep-boys were put to the blush by a few demands for visiting-cards; for Mr. Gustavus Augustus Squibbs, Esq., called on the ladies and left his card, and, moreover, he was a bachelor, and supposed to sport a heart somewhere beneath his wig and gold-rimmed eye-glass; at all events he had a new, big, red brick house, with a scientific yard in front, and a Chinese garden at the back of it.

A dozen times a day Lillie's bright face peeped through the honeysuckle, and as often her merry laugh rang out like music—"Mr. Squibbs' Byron Hall looked so funny; and pompous, little, dried-up Mr. Squibbs looked so funny himself." The happy, laughing groups who loved so well to visit her, still tapped at the front door with their own delicate fingers, and she shook her curls bewitchingly, and laughed till the tears stood in little, sparkling lakes among the dimples, when the girls talked of her setting her cap for the funny old bachelor, and the gentleman suggested that it *might* perhaps be more genteel to dance in her wide parlors than on the soft, green grass

beneath the forest trees of their favorite grove. There might have been one voice which could scarcely join in the jest, but all the rest were so busy planning their genteel evenings in Lillie's big house, that they never saw it.

The younger Mrs. Gray, unfortunately one of the new fangled ones, began to grow somewhat nervous at Lillie's free, joyous laugh and unpruned, natural grace; she certainly *was* very unlike the Chinese garden—and thenceforth the poor girl had to endure many an unheard of lecture. "Why, child," said the good lady, one day in an agony, and with her face longer by an ell than it had ever been before, "are you never going to acquire a proper appreciation of dignity? What *would* Mr. Squibbs say if he saw you now, as I live, with the broom in your hand, actually singing and dancing to that ragged boy's jews-harp? Oh, dear—oh, dear, I'm so ashamed of you!"

A shade of regretful sorrow settled on Lillie's bright face for a moment, as she stood suddenly still in the middle of the floor; but she involuntarily peeped through the honeysuckles as her mother paused, and her merry peal of laughter rang fairly across the street. Then dropping the broom, she sprang forward, and twining her arms around her mother's neck, while a mass of sunny curls fell all over her bosom, she murmured—"oh! mother, I did not mean to laugh, indeed! I am so sorry, but then, mother—Mr. Squibbs!" But her mother only put her coldly away, and walked out of the parlor through the jessamine-covered gate, and up the street; for despite every effort and all her real sorrow, Lillie's low laugh would well up at the thought of Mr. Squibbs. And pray what had she to do with him, or he with her? Or if he pleased to meddle, what need she care?

But she had little time to indulge either mirth or sorrow, for at that moment a bright, delicate bouquet fell at her feet, and a fairy note showed its snowy edge through the blushing flowers. A soft blush stole over her brow as she drew it out, and murmured—"I do wonder if Frank threw this himself"—but she didn't peep through the honeysuckles once, maybe she guessed more than she wondered, after all.

It was then Monday morning; and the following Wednesday was Lillie's birth-day. We had weeks before determined to surprise her with a pic-nic to the Oak Woods, almost at the source of our clear, cool stream. I look back to that day, even after the lapse of long, weary years, with a thrill of joy. Lillie, whom we all loved so dearly in our heart of hearts, was the life of our merry band; the day was so cloudless and

bright, the woods so green and cool, and last, though not least, the coffee was so delicious—there never was such coffee as we made in the woods that day—that the hours flew by, and sunset came before we had dreamed the day could be half over.

When Lillie, in the still moonlight that evening, had breathed her low "good-night, Frank," at the little gate, she sprang up the walk yearning to throw herself on her grandma's bosom, and shed a world of silent, happy tears; but a long, lank shadow, with an aristocratic nose and peaked chin, fell from the parlor window on the mossy pavement; and shrinking from stranger eyes and cold hearts that night, she glided softly through the scented portico, up to her little room, and throwing herself on a snowy lounge, too happy to wonder how that nose came there, she stole her little hand over her eyes, and hummed half unconsciously a low, thrilling tune. Oh! that *tele-a-tele* walk in the stilly night, it lay on her heart like a soft gleam of sunlight, calling out a gush of stirring melody. That manly, soul-speaking voice had not talked of love; they had said nothing which the world might not have heard; and yet both felt thrillingly in their inmost hearts, that they were to each other dearer than words can tell.

Only two days more, and what a weight of sorrow, the doubly bitter first sorrow, had settled down on that glad, young heart! Lillie had run up to her father's, one evening, with a vase of flowers, and a basket of rich, rare fruit; and sitting down with her parents in the handsome, newly-furnished parlors, had felt the music which all her life long had welled up from her bosom, flow back and lie there hushed as death; while a dark sorrow crept over her, till when she looked up, she had learned to shudder at the sunlight which before this day had made earth almost a heaven.

"I hope you are convinced now, Lillie," said her mother, at length, in the same business-like tone with which she had been speaking for such a long, long time, "that when you have so much more brilliant and rational prospects before you, it is time you should assume a different and more becoming character, and check any partiality which you may have unconsciously felt toward a wandering school-master. There are but few girls who would not envy you such a prospect. Just think of it! such a decided air! and so rich too!"

"We are aware, my daughter," said her father, quickly, as he saw Lillie about to speak, "that Mr. Weston's family is a superior one by birth, and that it may be, he is something of a genius;

but he has his profession to acquire yet, and then he must wait in uncertainty for patronage. Meanwhile he will very probably, in his absence, forget you, and then you will be disappointed like Kate Lee. We have, therefore, thought it best that we should be firm, and absolutely prohibit all further intercourse. As to this other affair, you will think differently of it after a little, and we presume our expressed wishes, with a little reason on your part, will accomplish it without difficulty. As your mother says, all you have to do is to think."

Lillie let the rose-bud she had held fall to the floor; and put on her bonnet with a slow, mechanical motion as she rose—

"Father, mother," she said, in a sad, tearful voice, but strangely calm and firm. "Be my partiality voluntary or involuntary, in your first command I will strive to obey you—so help me God! But I will never marry that hateful old man—never—never! While I have life, there will be a home for me somewhere, which will be a Paradise to that," and she glided from the room.

Her parents gazed at her in silent astonishment. The giddy girl had suddenly grown into a woman, a noble, true-hearted, self-sacrificing woman. Mrs. Gray spoke first—"she will go to her grandmother, you see, then her grandfather in his queer, straightforward way, will quietly put on his hat, walk down to the academy, and there will be an end to our pains."

"No," replied Mr. Gray, "I can be beforehand with him, and put on my hat too. I have it—Weston is as proud as Lucifer; Lillie will say nothing for a day or two, till they coax it out of her, and to-morrow is the last day of the term. I will see him. Never fear, we can succeed yet, and I am determined as you."

The academy closed with an exhibition; and if some of us noticed that the preceptor moved among the throng of bright, young faces with a paler brow and sadder step than usual, we supposed it natural, when the occasion must have made him feel anxious, perhaps fearful too. He did not walk home with Lillie that evening as he usually did, but rarely a day passed which did not find him in that tasteful, cheery parlor, and he would surely be in on this his last evening; so Lillie waited with a beating heart the interview which must be the last; but he did not come. The next day the stage rolled through the village as usual, crossed the bridge, turned the hill beyond, and Frank Weston was gone, while Lillie once more silently sought her room, alone. He was gone, and had made no sign—spoke never a word. There was some strange mystery in it.

Or could it be that already her father's conjecture was more than right? And she—oh! what an age she had lived since the night when she had laid there, singing in her happiness! Three days, as men measure time, but years, years to the suffering heart.

Lillie did not die of grief after this her first great sorrow, and neither did she move about with a pale, thin form, growing each day feebler and thinner; there are many, alas! on this glad earth, who wear a gay brow and laughing lip, who yet almost yearn the while that each heart-throb were the last; so little is left of brightness, so much of regret. She moved as usual about her customary duties, with a calm smile and kind word for those who loved her.

But then she was firm. Mr. Squibbs, in his persevering calls, never found her in the parlor, and all his presents were sent back at once, till at last dear, kind, old Mrs. Gray herself, who never could have dreamed of the fashionable "not at home," refused to see him. Poor Lillie! that first lecture in the trim parlor was not the last; but she hid her tears in her grandmother's bosom, and bore the infliction filially, but firmly, till her firmness triumphed, and she was permitted to walk quietly on in the path which she had chosen.

Her dear grandma had married so young herself, and had been so happy, that, though with characteristic delicacy she said nothing, she still felt anxious that her darling should follow her example. But though Lillie, growing more noble in her beauty, had many suitors, whom her grandparents would have been glad to see her choose, she turned kindly but firmly from them all, till the loving pair who had watched her anxiously, began to fear that when they were laid to rest among the roses in the old church-shadow, she, with her warm woman's heart, would be left alone in the chilly world. They could not understand her; she seemed almost to belong to a different world; the whole current of her thoughts and feelings appeared changed, and they could scarce believe their thoughtful, gentle Lillie was the same who had once carolled and frolicked through the old homestead like a merry bird.

And I—when away in a distant city, one bright spring morning—I flew up three pair of stairs to my own room, to read a letter directed in a well-known hand, felt too, how great a change those few years had made in our own, dear Lillie.

"Have you ever felt, Lucy dear," she wrote, "the burden of existing without an object, your life one great race-horse, ever running on without a goal? I sometimes think earth has no curse like the consciousness of energies to do, and nothing to be done—the yearning, panting, struggling to

find a life-object that ever melts away, and leaves you with all your garnered strength, a helpless, weary clod on this green earth. Oh! this stagnant existence is a death in life.

"I seem to move about with a stunned, bewildered kind of feeling, like one in a dream. In the midst of those who love me, and whom I love, I yet remain conscious of a great loneliness; that between them and myself, there is a gulf fixed. They are content with mere existence, and the little joys it hourly brings; I, with one wild, forced leap, sprang across, and am here!—here, with the dead feeling of passive indifference, yet looking out into the boundless future with a sick desire to know its all of darkness.

"To the heart which has ever been deeply stirred—which has been startled by the sudden revelation of its own overpowering strength, so strangely joined with utter, helpless weakness—which has striven to fathom its own depths and shuddered to find the effort vain—oh! to such a heart, Lucy, there is such a tameness and nothingness in the mass of petty interests which so engross the hearts of the many. And yet, I would give worlds to be back with my fellows, to dance once more with that wild joyous abandonment of soul, to feel my pulse bound again with old excitement, or beat low and happily with a calmer joy; but it seems to me, dearest, that nothing can stir my heart again. It is dying of rust.

"Oh, to be gentle, and pure, and good! To be content to live no longer for myself, but for others happiness. And sometimes there comes through the chaos, a dim knowledge that this might be a life-goal: but shall I ever reach it? and how—and when? What shall be the first step? Forgetfulness? Oh! Lucy, I am weak to-night. The past lies on my heart, and I yearn to nestle to your bosom like a child, and weep."

Poor Lillie! She had waked to think, and was suffering the penalty. Nearly at the same time, perhaps that evening, in a lawyer's office in the crowded city, at a square table, covered with green baize, a gentleman sat writing to a college chum. He wrote smilingly, at first, as though penning some old conceit, or playful sally, but, as he proceeded, his lips grew firm and almost sad.

"Though I do want to see you, Harry," he said, "and your inducements ought to be powerful enough to add me to the number of your visitors—for I doubt not your party is a pleasant one, and the ladies charming—yet I confess to being such a sad dog, they are all lost on me. In sober truth, I am wedded, body and soul, to ambition. I live with all my energies concentrated to one great object, before which, everything

must and shall bend, and I have neither time nor inclination to turn aside to the gardens of pleasure. But God forbid, Harry, that you should ever know the burning strength of a resolve like mine! You have never, in circumstances where the heart feels most keenly, been taunted with your poverty—I have! I have stood in the consciousness of man's strength, and feeling proudly that the untainted blood of a high-souled ancestry flowed in my veins, and heard a man tell me that I was poor, and must not love his daughter! Heaven knows, if she had been a tithe like him, I would have scorned her in my soul.

"And I heard him in silence, with a calm brow and curling lip, but even then, with the hot iron in my heart, my purpose was formed. I resigned forever the God-gift of woman's love, but I must—I will be a great man—proud, nobly, uprightly great!"

Poor Frank, too! One can scarce help wondering why Lillie's unfound life-object could not have been, to cheer and soothe that strong, passion-tossed heart, with her wealth of hoarded, objectless affection. Truly there are strange ways in life; and unions, which we would have, are not always decreed in heaven.

It was a clear, bright evening in mid-winter, when our well-filled sleigh dashed up to a large hotel, in our metropolis, which was crowded to overflowing. We were still in time. A trial was then pending before the supreme court of the state, which excited the most intense interest. A man had been arraigned for the murder of his wife, under circumstances of peculiar atrocity, and public opinion set strongly against him; but the evidence, though apparently strong, was entirely circumstantial, and the prisoner, indignantly and firmly, pleaded "not guilty." The witnesses had all been examined, and the speeches on the part of the prosecution delivered, but the counsel for the defendant had yet to speak. The prisoner had but one lawyer, and he a young man; but, as the immense building became filled to overflowing, all who gazed on that form, so commanding in its presence—that face, so steady and determined, so noble and lofty in its habitual expression, felt a vague impression rising in their bosoms, that the accused might, after all, be an innocent man; and a dim expectation brooded over the assembly, that some great power would rise to his rescue.

There was a silence, as of death, when that one man rose, and through the hours when his clear voice fell on the ear, we seemed to hold our breath, as if in fear lest a syllable should be lost. The form of the speaker dilated and grew tall; that flashing eye looked through and through

those on whom it fell; the calm, unimpassioned tones of an exquisitely undulated voice, rang in the ear like a trumpet-peak; for the heart felt that they spoke the truth. The dense mass was as one soul, swayed by the might of that one master-mind. And when he closed, there was a long, dead pause; the lull which follows and precedes the thunder-shock, and then, the pent-up feeling of that one, great heart, burst forth in an uncontrollable, deafening shout. Each man felt himself a freeman; he had thought, and reasoned, and decided, for himself; but in the decision, every voice agreed—"we have heard truth!" The judge's charge was short and pointed, and the jury gave their verdict without leaving the box—"not guilty." Again that thrilling shout went up to the vaulted roof, and when it died away, the stranger was gone! He had vanished amid the tumult, none knew how or whither; but when all men, with burning hearts, mused and talked, he sat alone again and wrote.

"I have triumphed, Harry! Without patronage, without money, without friends, in the face of every obstacle, I have wholly, proudly triumphed! The one unflinching resolve has attained its object; and now, you are thinking that I am mad, intoxicated, exulting in the consciousness of overcoming strength. Oh! Harry, Harry, in the midst of it all, the heart has waked. The triumph is as a dream—is nothing! Strength I have none—nothing but an infinite longing.

"I saw among the faces in the gallery to-day, one, changed indeed, grown thoughtful, earnest, I almost thought sad, in its matured and queenly beauty, but one I could never see and know it not. I do not know who she is now—whether she be Lillie Gray or—I cannot write that horrid name—or Mrs. Somebody else; at all hazards, I must and will see her. I felt, in that one glance, that *together* we had changed; that in heart and soul we could still be to each other, all that we once were and more, and I will not say I have no hope. Now I am trembling like a stricken deer, my whole being is swallowed up in the yearning to see her, to hear her voice, to touch her hand once more, and I will not wait! This night I will know the best or the worst."

"Lillie," said I, when late that night she came to me excited, and trembling, and hid her glowing face in my bosom, "Lillie, love, it's all right, after all, I see—but who could have thought of this when we started? Why it seems yet like a dream. Do tell me all! How on earth did it happen—how did he find you? and—"

And Lillie whispered—"I don't know myself, Lucy. You know I didn't feel like staying in the drawing-room there, with such a throng of

visitants, and I was sitting in the library alone, when all at once the door opened, and I heard that step. It came close, close to me, and—and—why, I don't know any more—only my head lay on his bosom, and my heart throbbed as if it would burst, till at last I just cried like a child. And then I was so, so happy—and all this time we had not spoken a word. Oh! Lucy, Lucy, I thought once I never should feel again; and now, do tell me, Lucy, am I dreaming, or is it real? What shall I do?"

And dear, warm-hearted Lillie sprang up and walked the floor, with her hands clasped nervously, and her color coming and going with every breath; till I began to think soda powders, or morphine, or something or other—my medical knowledge was not very extensive—might be a passable prescription in affairs of the heart.

Lillie did not die of joy either, but she seemed to change back again almost to sweet sixteen, and we really did all dance, (except some few who had grown too sedate and matronly and fatherly, in those sober years) we actually did dance in Mr. Squibbs' grand parlor, for Mrs. Gray, fortunately had another daughter, the counterpart of herself, who had proved more tractable, and had clearly and formally become Mrs. Gustavus Augustus Squibbs two years before.

Lillie's new home is as green and flowery and sweet as the old homestead, and her grandparents, feeling that it was home where she was, shared it with her; but they are slumbering together now, calmly and sweetly, by the church where they were married in their youth, and had worshipped together all their lives. "They were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided." And as I stood in the soft autumnal twilight, where the heart's-ease dotted the trees above them, and their favorite rose trees waved over their heads, I felt that by *their* resting-place was no place to weep. They were the calm, loving, sunny hearts, to which life and death were alike peaceful.

Mrs. Gray visits Lillie in her own carriage, glittering with gilding, and is very fond of talking of her *dear* daughter, the Hon. Mrs. Francis Weston. But bright, blooming, happy Lillie herself?—I said to her one day, not long ago—"well, dear, you have really found your little object at last—havr't you?"

She looked at her husband with a soft tear in her speaking eye, and I was answered; while I could not help thinking to myself, as he returned her glance, that somehow his body and soul had found something else to worship beside ambition.

## PLAYING AT CROSS PURPOSES.

BY MRS. JOSEPH C. NEAL.

No trash such as pathos and passion,  
Fine feelings, expression and wit;  
But all about people of fashion,  
Come look at the caps how they fit.—LORD HENRY'S NOVEL.

## CHAPTER I.

NEWPORT!—why it is just intolerable,” and the young lady, who pronounced this harsh sentence against our most brilliant watering-place, yawned.

“Oh, Josephine! Anything but that, if mamma would only consent to go there for a few weeks! But no! Here we must stay, where there is nothing, positively nothing to be seen or done.”

“You’d soon long for *nothingness*, at least I did, for we have posted about the country since June, and that’s the reason I teased ma to stop here before we went on to the White Mountains; there will be just the same nonsense going on there, I suppose. Dressing and flirting in the morning, ditto in the afternoon, ditto evening. La, child, how fresh and animated you look.”

“I shall be fresh in more senses than one if we stay at Centre Harbor much longer—there goes the breakfast-bell and your hair is not even put up. Here comes mamma too!”—and the colloquists ended a morning toilette as hastily as possible.

They were late when they entered the breakfast-room, and more than one glanced up with evident admiration as the party seated themselves to a delightful repast. There was “mamma,” Clara Cuthbert’s mamma, a dignified, upright lady of the old school, who still dressed in widow’s mourning, and invariably carried a black satin bag, which was Clara’s peculiar horror and detestation. She was leaning upon her daughter’s arm, and the two would have made of themselves a tableau; the young girl had a dark Spanish style of beauty; with those huge, fathomless eyes, she broke through one’s very heart. She was not large, but there was a slight imperiousness in her manner, particularly in the stamp of her little foot, and the quick motion of her delicate hands, when in the least excited, that gave you the idea of greater height.

Behind them lounged Clara’s friend, Josephine Bradford, with the very nonchalant air of one who did not think it worth while to try to make an impression on the party assembled. She had

arrived but the night before, in company with some distant relatives, whom she had persuaded to turn aside from their direct route, for a few days quiet by the beautiful Lake Winnipiseogee.

With all her affected horror of the principal amusement at a crowded watering-place, Miss Josephine excelled in these very points, dressing and flirting. That is she flattered herself that she did, and certainly had a train of professed admirers wherever she was known. To let you into a secret—the young lady had danced away her roses, in a rapid summer tour, and hoped to regain them in the quiet of Centre Harbor, which she remembered as having been a very dull summer resort, of some few very dull people, when a part of her school vacations had been passed there. The little village itself, it must be confessed, has few attractions, but it is situated in the most lovely bend of a beautiful lake, that furnishes peculiar amusement to those who are fond of boating and trout suppers. Besides, it is within a few miles ride of the Red Hills, from which some of Bartlett’s most beautiful views have been taken.

Josephine Bradford gained her point, her friends, the Howards, good-naturedly consenting to “be buried alive a week or so,” and the Concord stage set down the weary, dusty party at the door of a green shuttered hotel, evidently newly erected, and made comfortable by the aforementioned blinds, and a goodly number of piazzas, porches and the like. But Josephine was less astonished at the appearance of the weather-beaten public house—than at finding an old schoolmate, the sole occupant of the pretty furnished parlors into which they were ushered.

Of course the young ladies rushed into each other’s arms—wondered how they happened to meet here, begged for adjoining sleeping rooms, and sat up all night to talk over what had passed since their last meeting; which will account for their late rising and careless toilette.

Breakfast being over, they strolled out upon the piazza, overlooking the calm lake, rippling and flashing in the soft sunlight; just as a light

vehicle drew up with a dash, and a sudden check. Out sprang a lithe, fine-looking young man, throwing the reins to his companion, and looking around with a glance of earnest scrutiny.

Josephine Bradford had just noticed that this more leisurely individual was extremely *distingue*, and turned to say as much to her companion, when she found Clara blushing to the eager recognition of this younger and more impetuous friend.

"An old acquaintance, eh, Clara?" and the two girls instinctively retreated into their rooms, not before Josephine had noticed how becoming was a dark moustache to the somewhat haughty face that had looked upward for an instant.

"Tell me all about them, *ma belle*," she said, caressingly. "A little love affair is it, and mamma is obstinate, and the gentleman desperate?"

"How you jump at conclusions, Josephine, or rather leap over them. No, it's nothing of the kind. Lieutenant Freeman has passed several weeks here already, this summer, and so has his friend, Mr. Lisle. He was wounded in Mexico, Lieutenant Freeman, I mean, and was here to recover his health. Why he returns, I'm sure I can't tell. What possible attraction can there be for him in such a stupid place as this?"

Clara did not mean to tell what the children call "a naughty story," but she knew, in her heart of hearts, what the attraction was, and why the younger officer had persuaded himself he was still an invalid and needed country air. His friend Lisle returned with him, for the reason that he had no particular aim in existence, and liked Freeman's society, and trout fishing. Besides, boating was a passion, just now, with the young man, and here it was indulged to his heart's content.

Meantime Lisle's noble horses were cared for, and he himself had donned a linen blouse and broad straw, preparatory to a comfortable stroll, while Freeman walked impatiently up and down the porch, as if expecting the arrival of some one.

By and bye the rustle of light drapery was heard; and the friends entered the drawing-room. Josephine Bradford had at once seated herself with a "newspaper publication," apparently absorbing all her attention; but for all that, she saw the expression of delight with which Freeman advanced to meet Clara, and the half-cordial, half-disdainful expression with which his greeting was received. Then she must be introduced, and then Mr. Lisle accidentally looked in to see what had become of his friend, and somehow he forgot his intended walk, or it was too warm;

something prevented it; and when the Howards came in, the four were chatting away as if they had known each other for years. Mr. Howard took a prodigious fancy to Freeman, and his pretty wife thought what a fine pair Clara and the young officer would make. Then a late afternoon drive to the Red Hills was proposed, and Josephine said eagerly, "yes, how delightful!"

## CHAPTER II.

A LIGHT Rockaway wagon held them all so comfortably. Mamma declining to ride, and placing Clara in Mrs. Howard's care, with a multitude of cautions against the night-dew, if they were out late: and away sprung Mr. Lisle's thoroughbred steeds, guarded by their master.

Clara was rather quiet at first. Something seemed to occupy her thoughts, until Josephine whispered—"Mr. Freeman does not take his eyes from you"—then the small Hebe head arose, and the dark eyes flashed, while jests were banded, and sparkling repartee elicited musical laughter from the young ladies. Then they sang, too, going slowly up the hills, and Lisle—who had a fine tenor—joined in a duett with Josephine, while the others remarked how well their voices blended. Never was there such delightfully unrestrained conversation—one can't be prim and proper when in such close quarters as six in a Rockaway.

They had concluded to defer their visit to the summit of the hills until another day, and so turned aside near the base of one of them, and bowled along a beautifully shaded road, with here and there a glimpse of the placid lake, and its hundred islands. They were in search of a spring Clara knew of—Mr. Freeman and herself had visited it before, and told the others of its beauty. So after awhile the horses were left in charge of a ragged little lad, and the party entered a deep wood—

"Where eternal twilight lingered,  
Through the voiceless summer day."

Even Josephine Bradford forgot herself for a while, and was happy, with no minister to her vanity. Mr. Lisle had given his arm to Mrs. Howard, and the two girls strolled silently, a little way from them. The spring was in a most romantic dell, and came gushing and gurgling from the roots of a tall pine. An attempt had been made by some one to form a basin for it, but the stones were now moss-grown and irregular, and the silvery stream flashed over them disdainfully.

Here the ladies sat down to rest awhile, and

then Mr. Freeman urged them to go on to a little further, to a glade that seemed formed for a fairy ring. Clara half rose, and then sat down again. Mrs. Howard was all eagerness to see "Titania's dressing-room," thus they had named it, and Mr. Lisle walked on beside her. Mr. Howard joined them now, but Josephine had resolved not to leave her friend, and Freeman reluctantly hastened on, vexed at himself for his enthusiasm about the glade, and giving Clara a half reproachful look.

Josephine broke a branch of witch-hazel, and began to beat the grass and the little wood-flowers most unmercifully. Clara dropped her hand carelessly into the spring, and then held up the slender fingers, dripping with moisture.

"This is very stupid," said she, at length. "Yes, very; why on earth did you stay behind?"

"Because—because—to tell the truth, I thought Lieutenant Freeman was going to offer me his arm, and I didn't like to refuse it."

"Any one would think it was his hand—you are so prudish about it! What's the objection—a very finely turned arm I thought it, and a very fine fellow he seems, too."

A flush of faintest crimson shone through her clear cheek, as Clara bent once more over the stream.

"Now tell me the truth about this," said Josephine. "Is he or not a rejected lover?"

"Why, not—not exactly—that is——" Clara knew that she had chilled an earnest and impassioned declaration that had once been bursting forth, by a cold, indignant glance.

"But you do not dislike him—he seems devoted to you—I cannot understand it!"

"Seems!—there you have it. Do you suppose if I were penniless, any man would persevere in addresses he sees are not acceptable?"

"Now, Clara! You don't keep up the ridiculous, school-girl notions, that every man who looks at you is a fortune-hunter. You will never marry if you do."

"I can't help it," said Clara, bitterly. "You know I have been deceived almost into regard once, by a man, whose affection could not stand the test of my guardian's threatened insolvency. It taught me a lesson I shall never forget."

"But you're good at catechising, Josephine," she resumed, "let me take my turn. How came you so suddenly to be so amiable as to offer to sit with me?"

"Simply because Mr. Lisle *didn't* offer me his arm. I never care for the society of married gentlemen, and poor Freeman is so absorbed in you he counts as nobody. I've taken a vast fancy to this same Mr. Lisle."

"It won't do any good, Joe. He'll never marry, so Freeman says, not for years at least. Besides, Miss Chester has been making a dead set at his hundred thousand dollars; that tall girl in light hair, you saw at dinner."

"Indeed!—*has* she!—I'll engage she shan't succeed, not if I take up arms against her. So Mr. Frederick Lisle, is a woman hater, or rather lady killer it would seem. Well, I've two weeks before me, and see where Mr. Frederick Lisle's indifference will be then."

"Why, Josephine!"

"Bless your dear little unsophisticated heart. I've been engaged once already this summer. We only look on these things *pour passer les temps*."

And then they both started, for there was a loud cracking of branches, and the very person in question stood before them. He had returned by another, shorter route. "He was alarmed that the ladies should have been left alone so long." He was all smiles and animation, though he addressed himself particularly to Clara, who was in a terrible trepidation, lest he should have overheard her friend's remark. But this was impossible, thought Josephine.

When they were next seated in the Rockaway, Mr. Freeman was entrusted with the reins. But he turned to look behind so often that Mrs. Howard declared their necks were in jeopardy, and Lisle laughingly resumed the whip. Clara seemed to have forgotten her reserve, and chatted with the delighted young officer, while Josephine sank into a reverie, from which she started now and then, to reply to some observation from Mr. Lisle, who seeing the others so engrossed, addressed his conversation principally to her. As twilight came on, they all followed Josephine's example of silent meditation; Mr. Freeman now and then venturing a glance, eloquent with love, toward Clara. Mr. Howard became absorbed in a business transaction, his wife thought of her little ones, and longed to see their faces, while Josephine and Mr. Lisle each had a deeply interesting *tele-a-tete*, which we have no right to intrude upon. So the twilight and the silence grew still deeper, until the village hotel came in sight, and they saw Mrs. Cuthbert standing upon the piazza watching for them.

### CHAPTER III.

It was quite remarkable—Clara did not once speak of leaving Centre Harbor, after Mr. Freeman's arrival. "Mamma was so comfortable now it would be a shame to disturb her"—and certainly there was a great deal more to be

done, more than ever before. In the first place there was some one to dress for—our lady readers know what a vast difference this makes in the length of time one gives to a toilette. Clara did not acknowledge this to herself—quite to the contrary, she was determined not to be pleased with Lieutenant Freeman, and to be as disagreeable as possible to him on every occasion. But Josephine Bradford did not hesitate to acknowledge to herself that she wore white morning dresses because Mr. Lisle had said they were becoming to every woman, and her luxuriant hair was braided with especial reference to his taste, and openly expressed admiration. Moreover, she had suddenly become interested in horsemanship, and patted Mr. Lisle's noble steeds, quite fearlessly, though invariably shrinking with terror all the while. It was the same with boating, though at any rippling wave, she was ready to scream with apprehension; and angling! If you could but have seen the martyr-like patience with which she dangled the rod hour after hour, protected from the sun by Mr. Lisle's broad straw, which exactly suited her gipsy style of beauty, (and this she well knew) you would have agreed with me, that she herself earned the admiration she so eagerly sought for.

She was bent upon a conquest of Mr. Lisle. It was evident to the Howards, who said nothing about it, but were vexed at it nevertheless. It was also quite plain to Clara, who did not hesitate to remonstrate with her friend. Freeman, absorbed as he was with the critical position of his own love affairs, found time to warn Mr. Lisle that Miss Bradford had the reputation of being a sad flirt, and even the company at the house began to look upon the match as a settled thing. For Mr. Lisle did not seem aware of this scheming, and to all appearance drew near the brook, as surely and delightedly as any speckled trout he had ever landed.

Mr. Lisle drove them out in the morning, and they sailed about the placid lake at eventide, watching the glorious sunsets, and gliding among the green islands that rose everywhere around them. Sometimes their party was increased by the addition of others from the house, but more generally the Howards seemed to chaperone the young people, while Mrs. Cuthbert, with a little Southern indolence, preferred to sit in her shaded room, and chat with other mamma's.

Wayward was the very term for Clara's manner. Sometimes Mr. Freeman would be sure that his regard was returned, and then if he ventured to show his delight, her repelling coldness drove him almost to despair. So nearly two weeks had passed—Mr. and Mrs. Howard

consenting to extend their stay, at the earnest pleadings of the younger ladies, and not a little interested in the termination of young Freeman's suit. They saw how earnestly he loved, with the rash, impetuous enthusiasm of his nature, and wondered at Clara's blind suspiciousness.

Day after day a struggle between pride, distrust and love, shook the young girl's heart, and as ever her lover was by turns attracted and repelled. Mrs. Cuthbert all this while was content to let matters take their course. She knew Lieutenant Freeman's character to be above reproach, that he was brave, and of a good family; if Clara chose to love him, she supposed she must too, for what had she but that daughter's happiness to live for. The last of a happy household, always delicate in health, no wonder that her own convenience and her own pleasure were never thought of in comparison. It was for her that she left their Southern home, the instant that the enervating breath of summer swept over it, for her that she braved the weariness of toilsome journies—and Clara, knowing all this, was duly grateful and attentive, though not always as considerate as an elder person would have been.

They began to talk of leaving soon, and every one said at once how delightfully the time had passed. Then young Freeman looked gloomy for as yet his encouragement had not been sufficient for a declaration, and he knew there was no excuse for joining the Cuthbert's on their home journey. Clara, too, was moody and more fretful than ever. And now a cloud came over the hitherto unclouded horizon of Josephine's schemes. Mr. Lisle, formerly paying all the little attentions of an accepted lover, now needed to be lured to any courtesy. He hung over her no longer when she sung, and had not proposed a duett in ten days. How provoking, just as they were about to separate! A coldness had arisen between herself and the Howards—of manner rather than words—they were displeased with the spirit of coquetry in which she indulged, and thought it best, on many accounts to break up the party as quietly as possible. Yet, for Mr. Freeman's sake, who despairingly had made a confidant of Mr. Howard, they consented to stay another day.

They were all seated in the parlor, when it was positively determined that the next would be the last evening they would spend at Centre Harbor. Then conversation languished. No one asked Josephine to sing, and she grew tired of strumming aspeggios upon her guitar. And now the young people proposed a game of whist, as the last resource of dullness. Josephine, as

usual, eagerly assented; but Mr. Freeman was disinclined. Of course, in the provoking cut for partners, Josephine was disappointed. Mr. Lisle was fated to join partners with Clara, and more than all, seemed highly delighted with the arrangement. Freeman looked over Miss Bradford's hand, in a fever of jealous impatience, and seemed so out of temper, so unlike himself as he suggested her play, that Mrs. Howard at last whispered to him with a significant glance, that he had best leave the players to themselves, or he might lose another game, in which there was more at stake. Whist did not seem to be very entertaining, for they all threw up their hands on the second rubber, and proposed a stroll on the piazza. Mr. Howard was weary of an inattentive partner, for Miss Bradford was so interested in the evident good understanding that existed between Mr. Lisle and his partner, that she revoked constantly. This was an offence not easily overlooked by Mr. Howard.

A more satisfactory arrangement ensued. Mr. Freeman offered his arm to Clara, who did not refuse it now. Mr. Howard and his wife strolled off down the moonlit road, and Mr. Lisle, with Josephine, joined the others on the piazza. Then, after a few turns, Mr. Freeman protested it was too damp for Clara, they must return to the parlor for her shawl, and Josephine sat down in the porch to await their return. Mr. Lisle seated himself beside her. The coquette's heart beat fast. The hour, the opportunity—surely he would not lose it? She glanced upward; he was looking, with most provoking coolness, at the moon, and asked her if the circle around its pale radiance, did not betoken ruin! Ah, what eyes those were, thus turned toward her. Large, clear, brown orbs, that spoke—just what language he, Mr. Lisle, chose they should.

"I promised to sing you that Spanish ballad, did I not? Shall I do so soon?" and Mr. Lisle complacently offering his arm, led the way back to the now deserted drawing-room.

Josephine sat perfectly still—a host of turbulent feelings disquieted her. There was a fine compression of her small crimson mouth, a glance of defiance in her unbending eyes. Mr. Freeman did not break the silence, save by a hurried and nervous stride, as he folded his arms and paced before her. Despair of gaining the love he so courted, jealousy of his friend's evident admiration, love, madness, were boiling in his heart. He had been so near the goal—his trembling lips had once more murmured his devotion, and she had smiled for an instant upon him, then ere he could see the change, she had turned away and joined those they had just separated from.

"I did not think her a coquette," he bitterly murmured. "Yet it must be so. Why else should she baffle me in this way—why seem to love, yet so constantly repel me? By heaven! Lisle is no longer a friend of mine; he shall answer for this." But ere he could form a resolution, a light hand touched his shoulder, and Josephine Bradford arrested his steps. "See," was all she said, pointing toward the open window, but there was a fire flashing from her eyes, and an unnatural flush upon her cheek.

At any other moment, there would have been nothing in the tableau presented, but now, it was the last drop in the cup, already mantling to the brim.

Clara had taken a low seat, and with the guitar supported carelessly by her white arm, looked upward to Lisle, while she chanted the wild ballad of a border love, and Lisle bent over her with undisguised admiration in those brilliant eyes. "I will tell her all—I will show her what she has proved herself to be," said Freeman, fiercely, and ere the frightened Josephine could detain him, he had dashed aside her hand and was standing before them.

"Miss Cuthbert," said he, slowly hissing rather than speaking the words, as he stood with folded arms before her, "I have come to bid you farewell forever. I tell you how madly I have loved you, and how bitterly I regret to have wasted affection on one who has now assumed openly her real character, that of a coquette; and, shall I say it, at once heartless and unprincipled!"

Lisle started to his feet. Clara dashed down the guitar and rose to her proudest height with an indignant "Sir! and this to me!" But he was gone. He had rushed out into the night air, he knew not, cared not whither, and Mr. Lisle at once followed him.

But the storm of passion was past! He was now trembling with excitement and weak as a child. He saw all his folly, his rudeness, and his desperation! He smote his forehead with clenched hands, and prayed his friends to leave him till he should be calm. "Anything you ask to-morrow," said he—and Lisle saw that chiding would be unwise, and entreaty was useless. He pitied from his inmost soul, that stormy, ungenial heart, but he knew that his greatest crime had been a wild, and it would seem unreturned idolatry. He could not blame himself, for he knew he had not been guilty of even a traitorous thought, and he attempted in vain to account for the sudden outbreak of passionate words and thoughts.

Delicacy forbade his return to the parlor,

where he saw that Mrs. Howard was with Clara. She had drawn the weeping girl to her heart, and tried to soothe her. Josephine was there too, but naturally calm and impressive. He knew not what part her's had been in the evening's *denouement*, and how deeply she now regretted her jealous, unprincipled treachery; he wondered that she should look on so coldly. He strolled down to the boat-house, and when he returned an hour after, the same group still occupied the room, but Mr. Howard was there now, and seemed pleading with Clara. "No," he heard her say, indignantly. "It was an insult which a Cuthbert cannot overlook. If my brother had been alive, he would not have dared"—and then Mr. Howard said mildly—

"You are unjust, Miss Cuthbert. You do not know how your coldness has wounded him. Never was there a more devoted, a more honorable love, than he has borne to you. Think, was there no blame on your part?"

And then even while her lips trembled with the recollection of her purposed withdrawal from him, there was another added to the group. It was Freeman himself, pale and saddened in his bearing. The trace of the recent struggle was visible in the heavy eyes, which now looked mournfully upon the proud girl.

"I have come," said he, "not to apologise, but to beg most earnestly your forgiveness. There were witnesses to my rudeness, they now see my humiliation. I know, that if any I had, I have now forfeited all claims to your esteem. But ere I go, never again to look upon one I have so worshipped, can you, will you refuse to accord me one look of pardon"—and he gazed with a sad intensity into her face.

There was a moment's almost breathless suspense. Clara's veiled eyes were turned away from the suppliant, but her lips quivered, and tears stole through the slender fingers. Then the hand was slowly withdrawn; it was placed in his, and her eyes spoke all that he had asked.

They were left to seal their reconciliation alone; for, as it moved by a single impulse, those who had witnessed this strange scene, stole silently away; and when Clara tapped timidly at the door of Mrs. Howard's room an hour after, she hid her face upon the bosom of her near friend, to whisper all her happiness, all her regret.

How foolishly suspicious she had been! How noble and how true he was! And now if "ma," was pleased, she would try to atone for the past by her future devotion. Mamma must not be disturbed to-night, it was so late—but Josephine, she must go and tell Josephine all about it, and she glided away again with noiseless footsteps.

Josephine was looking out upon the calm night, and wishing its peace could enter into her soul. She would have given worlds to have been assured of an affection so true, so absorbing, as that she had just witnessed. The coquette began to find that she had not trifled away all her better nature.

She heard Clara's confession with scarcely a response, and her "good-night, darling," was uttered almost unconsciously.

#### CHAPTER IV.

THAT mamma made no objection was to be inferred from her manner toward Mr. Freeman, as she placed Clara in his charge on the morrow's boating expedition.

"I shall look to you for Miss Clara's safe keeping after this," she said, and the grateful look which the young officer returned, amply repaid good Mrs. Cuthbert for the implied sanction to his suit.

"We leave to-morrow," said Mrs. Howard, after a somewhat lengthened pause in conversation. "Let us make an agreement to meet here next summer this time."

"I'm delighted with the spot," was her husband's response, "and say yes, heartily."

"And I," said Josephine, looking toward Mr. Lisle as she spoke.

"Certainly," was his assent; but the glance which accompanied it, crimsoned the brow and cheek of her to whom it was directed.

"We have no objection," ostentatiously spoke Mr. Freeman—and then they laughed heartily at his "royal pronoun," and Clara made a faint attempt to resent it.

Mrs. Bradford had a sudden desire to angle once more the little island cove that had been their frequent resort. Mr. Lisle, whose attentions were more direct than ever before, offered at once to bait the hooks and adjust the tackle. Clara had an equally sudden fancy for some water-lilies, that she had noticed the day before, a little way beyond, and so the boat floated around bearing the two, whom all regarded as acknowledged lovers, alone.

There was only one seat on the miniature beach, a large dry stone. It was a perilous juxtaposition. They watched the boat glide out of sight—Josephine skipped a pebble over the dancing waves. And now, Mr. Lisle detained her hand as she would have gathered another. She dared not look up—she did not withdraw it. For once the coquette's heart was enlisted—for once it fluttered with more than gratified vanity, as she awaited a declaration.

"It has been a bright dream after all," said Mr. Lisle. "What could he mean?"

"I for one could almost have wished it a reality. Do you always counterfeit so well, Miss Bradford?" he continued.

Josephine's cheek flushed, but she said not a word. She made a faint attempt to withdraw her hand, but he held it gently, yet firmly.

"Forgive me," he continued, "that I did not sooner reveal to you my knowledge of the part you were playing. But I accidentally overheard your plans in my poor behalf. As I knew that your heart was untouched, I could take care of my own. We shall separate to-morrow, but you must allow me to thank you for the pleasant illusion in which my last week has sped. I could almost wish it were not a phantasy, and that you did indeed possess for me the regard you have so admirably counterfeited. But I do not flatter myself—I know it was '*pour passer les temps*'"—and turning away he whistled lightly, "The dream is past," as he walked slowly off.

Had he looked back, he would have seen emotion that would have convinced him that Josephine was now at least no dissembler.

She knew she was alone; and for a moment sat as one suddenly stupified. Then came a wild burst of tears, and suppressed sobs, that shook her whole frame. But it passed. Disappointment—shame—anguish, all were stifled, and he found her with a smiling lip when he returned, and jesting carelessly with the boating party, who were rallying her on her ill success in angling. They little knew the double truth.

The whole party were perplexed by what followed. Josephine and Mr. Lisle were coldly polite to each other, and yet they could not believe she would refuse him. Yes, that must be it, for he more than once broke out into snatches of the song we have alluded to, and as quickly

was silent again. While Josephine sat with a rested head, and trailed her hand through the cool water.

"Josephine, I must say it, you are a shameful coquette!" broke out Mr. Howard, indignantly, as they entered their own parlor. But for once she ventured upon no vindication, and Clara found her in tears when dinner was announced.

She did not meet Mr. Lisle again, until they assembled in the parlor the morning of their departure. Then she was in the wildest spirits.

"Thoroughly heartless!" was his mental ejaculation, as he handed her into the carriage; but he did not quite believe it, after all—and sighed, involuntarily, as he caught a last glimpse of her delicate hand, fluttering back a shower of kisses to Clara, who stood beside him.

Mr. Freeman—for we must drop his title, as his voluntary service in his country's cause was at an end—escorted Mrs. Cuthbert and her daughter as far as Saratoga, where they were to remain until September, now that the bustle, Freeman so hated, was over. And after he had left, Clara despatched an epistle of six closely written pages to Josephine, the real object of which was, to beg her to come to Savannah early in the spring, and act as her bridesmaid. This was crowded into four lines of a postscript.

The invitation was accepted: and at last, preparations for the consummation of Mr. Freeman's wishes were rapidly progressing. One thing more, however. Mr. Lisle found it impossible to leave home at that time, though his friend remarked, that this impossibility did not arise until after he had accidentally mentioned that Miss Bradford would be first bridesmaid. Which discovery confirmed more fully his previous suspicion, that the young lady had rejected his addresses on that memorable morning of their last boat ride.

## THE COUNTERFEITER'S DAUGHTER.

BY CLARA MORETON.

AMID the romantic hills of Hampden county, the beautiful War-ri-no-coe wends its way, now calm and placid as the gleaming surface of a polished mirror, and anon, fretting and foaming against the stones and rocks that impede it in its progress. At intervals, of but a few miles, small villages of white houses, with green lattices, nestle lovingly between the crag-crowned hills, and the river murmurs along through their midst, spanned here and there by rustic bridges, which greatly add to the picturesque beauty of the scenery.

In the whole length of the Warrinocoe, from its rise in the mountains, to where it loses itself in the broad Connecticut, there is not a wilder spot than the little village where a portion of my sketch is laid. Here, the river winds along the base of a mountain, then passes through a ravine with scarcely room for a road—then the valley widens gradually for a quarter of a mile—and then, as gradually, the hills approach nearer and nearer, forming, at length, a narrow gorge, through which the Warrinocoe escapes after dividing the little valley as equally, as if the hand of man, with compass and rule, had marked out its course.

Two rustic bridges span the stream between the gorge and the wilder ravine. At the upper bridge the water glides calmly and gracefully in its crystal clearness to the rough logs of the mill-dam, and there, in one unbroken sheet of silver, it falls over, unmindful of the noise and tumult it is hastening to meet.

Directly facing the southern end of the lower bridge, the white spire of the village church arises, and on the smooth, green lawn in front, the children roll their hoops, and fly their kites, for it is the only level place beside the river road throughout the village. The dwellings are scattered up and down, between the two bridges, on either side, and not one of them but has their compliment of shaded trees, wreathing vines, and flowering shrubs.

The road from the upper bridge crosses the lawn, just in front of the church, while the one which sweeps down the hills from a northerly direction, over the lower bridge, curves round a latticed cottage, and the little school-house, and loses itself in the other road, just where the

trees grow the thickest, and the river looks the loveliest before entering the gorge.

For twelve delightful miles this road winds on, keeping beside the river in one almost unbroken mass of shade. The luxurious wild vines arch across from tree to tree, whose thickly woven branches present an impervious canopy to the scorching rays of the mid-day sun, and the air is never free in summer-time from the rich perfume of the wild blossoms, which spring from the tangled thickets on almost every side.

Here and there, embosomed amidst the forest trees, scattered farm-houses and insulated dwellings appear at intervals, during the first five miles, and then, for more than a mile, the road winds deeper and darker, until suddenly emerging from the forest, it sweeps with a broad curve, around the base of a hill, thickly covered with masses of waving foliage, containing every shade of green, from the delicate leaf of the silver maple, to the dark hue of the tasselled pine and towering cedar. Not a tree, or shrub, here separates the highway from the stream, but the road winds along, skirting its very brink; and the image of the passer-by, be he in carriage or on foot, is reflected as in a mirror, in the pure depths of the here placid river, which spreads itself out in such a broad, unbroken sheet, that it looks more like a miniature lake, than the wild-foaming mountain torrent that it is.

Too beautiful a spot, is this, for the haunts of sin, and yet, for years, was this portion of the country infested by a gang of counterfeiters, who, by their ingenuity, eluded, for a long time, all pursuit, and even, when imprisoned, found some means of escape.

One of their principal places of rendezvous, was a small, low-browed cottage, which stood at the very foot of the hill, which here slopes down nearly to the river, and just where the road enters the forest again. It was shaded in front by the trees which spread over from the opposite side, while at either end window you could see up and down the road, unobstructed by shrubbery of any description. The back of the cottage was one story higher than the front, or rather one story lower, and a beaten path led from the one back door, through the thicket

to the masses of rocks just below the house, where the river rushes headlong from crag to crag, streaming through deep and dark fissures, and leaving the topmost rocks bare, and easily passed, excepting in the season of freshets. The bank on the opposite side is steeper, and a portion of the river diverted from its original channel, here pours over the rocks into an abyss full fifty feet below.

Over this frightful chasm, a rude bridge had been constructed from rock to rock, of a few planks nailed together, with a hand-railing of the untrimmed boughs of forest trees; but it looked so frail and trembling that few ventured to pass. A heavy stone at either end steadied the crossing, and served, in time of high wind, to keep it from blowing away. Here, there was no danger from freshets, for the water would spread far over the meadows, before it could reach the top of the lower crag, which, at such times, always stood a lone and solitary sentinel of the rage and fury of the rushing waters, which foamed and dashed against it on every side.

At the front door of this little cottage, one cold, windy evening in October, there stood a young girl looking wistfully up the road—although the light of the moon, which struggled through clouds, was so misty and feeble, that she could not have discerned a figure until it was within a few yards of the place where she stood. For more than an hour she remained leaning against the wood-colored frame of the door; now stamping her feet with impatience, and again giving vent to her disappointment in muttered words, and half-stifled exclamations.

"Molly, come here," cried a deep, hoarse voice from within, and the young girl answered the summons, slamming the door after her with so much violence that the whole house shook. The room she entered was low, with dingy ceilings, and an unmatted floor. In an old arm-chair beside the fire-place, with the light of the flickering flame reflected full upon his face, there sat an old man, his narrow forehead shaded with the long grey hair, which covered his head profusely. His keen black eyes rested full upon the face of the girl as she approached, and in a quick petulant tone asked him what he wanted.

"I want you to sit down here, and keep me company," he replied; "what's the use standin' outside in the cold, lookin' for Bob, when like as not, he won't be here till midnight?"

"But father, he wrote that he would be here before sunset, and I am afraid that something has happened him," said the young girl, her wild but beautiful features expressing all the anxiety which she felt. She drew a low seat up to the

embers of the smouldering fire, and crossing her hands over her knees, bent her head over them. Her father laid his hand, which was much too soft and white for a common laborer's on his daughter's head, and smoothing the glossy black hair, which the wind had dishevelled, he said—

"Never fear for Bob, Molly; he is too quick witted to suffer himself to be caught, I tell you, and though he hadn't ought to disappoint you, he'll set it all right when he comes, I guess; so cheer up, and get me a mug of cider—there's a good girl."

She arose, and taking down an iron candlestick from the mantel, thrust the wick against the burning coal, and with the tallow still dripping on the stone hearth, she lighted it, and set it down on the table, which bore the remains of their evening's repast. Then taking a mug from the cupboard, she left the room with the light. In a few minutes she returned with the mug to her father, and after heaping the wood on the fire, she moved her seat to one beside the window, which looked up the road.

The wood crackled and blazed upon the hearth, illuminating every corner of the small apartment. Over the mantel a varnished wood-cut of Jackson, in a rough frame, was suspended, while a large map of Massachusetts, and one of the United States, adorned the wall on either side. A maple framed glass hung between the two front windows, and on the small table beneath, lay a pile of soiled engravings and a quantity of worn books.

"There, father, I heard the tramping of a horse's feet," said the girl, springing wildly from her seat and rushing to the door. This time she was not disappointed, for within a stone's throw the horse stood—his rider leisurely dismounting.

"Ah! Robert, how worried I have been about you," said she. "It is after nine, and you wrote that if nothing happened, you would be here before sunset."

"Better late than never, Mary," replied the young man, as he passed an arm around her, waist, and, bending over, kissed the lips that had been raised to chide.

She slipped from his embrace, and gliding into the room, soon wrought a wondrous change in the appearance of the tea-table.

Meanwhile the two bent over the fire and whispered long and earnestly together, and the younger counted out upon a stand between them, several piles of bright, shining, silver dollars, and a heap of fresh new bank notes. These they huddled together in a coarse brown bag, and loosening a stone in the far corner of the hearth, they deposited the treasure there, and

the youngest took his seat at the supper-table. He ate heartily of the cream toast and fresh cakes, and then turning to the fire, renewed his conversation in the same low tone with the old man, while Mary hastened to clear the table, and after washing the dishes, arranged them on the dresser.

"Come, father, you and Robert can finish your conversation to-morrow, when I have to be busy—now that I am through, let me have a little talk with him, for I have a great deal to say to-night."

"Very well, Moll, give me another light, for I'm tired and sleepy; and I'm thinking," he said, turning to the younger man, "that you'd better tell her all about it," so saying, he left the room.

"Mary," said Robert, "I have got into a most confounded scrape, and you will have to help me out of it, or I shall swing, for what I know."

"Oh, Robert! what have you done now?" gasped the affrighted girl, and she bent her dark eyes searchingly upon him—"tell me, there is no blood upon your hands—tell me quick, or I shall die."

"Behave yourself, Mary," answered Robert, "and don't look so like a maniac. I'm no murderer, I can assure you, and I hate this life as badly as you do; though if one can't make a living in one way, they must in another; but come, I haven't told you what a narrow escape I met with in Albany."

At this moment a loud tap upon the window pane, repeated before either of them had time to reach the spot, alarmed them. It was a signal of danger, and Robert hastily threw up the window.

"What now?" he cried.

"Let me in quick," was the answer—"I have a message from the village."

Mary hastened to the door and unbarred it, and a tall, gaunt-looking man, with his clothes hanging about his sinewy frame, as if they had been thrown around him, bent his head to pass under the doorway, and entered the room.

"Where is Steve?" he said, casting his eyes around.

"Father has gone to bed," answered Mary; "is anything the matter?"

"I should rather guess so—you'd better go wake him, and tell him Dan Meadows aint't a fellow to be scared in a hurry." Mary passed out.

"They are after both of you," said the man, "and there's the all-fireddest excitement I ever seed about it. The Squire's set against you, because you passed off a bill to him."

"Never you mind—I'm safe yet, Dan, in that

quarter—the Squire must be over anxious to turn states-evidence against his son-in-law, I reckon," and Robert nodded his head, and winked knowingly.

"You don't say! thunder and lightnin'! Well, this beats all I ever hearn—be you, now really; Mister Bob?" ejaculated the surprised looking Dan.

"I ain't anything else!" was the only answer Robert had time to give, for Stephen Billings, followed by Mary, came into the room.

"What now, Dan?" said the old man, as he bent his small, sparkling eyes upon him.

"Why a couple of 'what do ye call 'ems,' got on the track of this bird here," said Dan, pointing to Robert, "and they come along into the bar-room of the General Jackson just after sunset;—Mister Bob's white hoss hadn't more nor cleared itself in the bushes, when I seed 'em come pattering over the upper bridge. They went into the bar-room, and I followed 'em. Squire Merton was sittin' thar, and they give such an exact description of Mr. Bob, I know'd in a minnit how 't would go, and sure enuf the Squire jumped to his feet, and tell'd them he know'd all about him, and that he lived at times with one Steve Billings—a man whom he reckoned wasn't much better; and then he went on to describe you, the men larfin' to split, for they said you must have been the very one that slipt away from them once, when your hands had been already cuffed, and the next week the sheriff got the hand-cuffs done up, and sent to him in a bundle. The Squire 'gin a good description."

"The Squire be —;" muttered Billings, between his closed teeth.

"Well its time you was stirrin' anyhow," said Dan, "for they agreed to get men and surround the house by daylight."

"The d—l they did," exclaimed Robert Peets, springing to his feet, "that's sooner than I reckoned. We must out with those dies in the cellar—come, Dan, you help me stow them away in the rocks, and Billings you'd better burn up those cursed notes, for we shall have a hard enough time without those to bear testimony against us."

The next hour was one of bustle and confusion; but when that had passed the house was quiet. Dan Medows had walked down the road to the next bridge, with the intention of crossing to the opposite side, and returning home in that way to avoid meeting the expected party from the village; and Billings, after mounting Peets' horse, bent down to his pretty daughter and whispered—

"Keep of good heart, Molly, love, and don't be

worried if I ain't back for a week or more, and don't keep Bob too long, for I shouldn't be surprised if they should be here before long, and conceal themselves in the bushes." So saying, he rode away, and Mary, with a long-drawn sigh, shut and barred the door, and returned to Robert, who was bending gloomily over the fire.

"Mary, do you love me?" said he, raising his strikingly handsome face to hers, as she stood beside him.

"Heart and soul, Robert—I am yours forever. But why do you ask me?" she said, slipping one hand into his, and resting the other about his neck. He drew her gently to his lap, and kissed her tenderly, but there was something so peculiar in the tones of her voice, that he seemed to hesitate in answering her question.

"I have loved you from a child," she continued, "not only loved, but idolized you; and when I see your strong mind and noble intellect stooping to coin such things as these," and she spurned with her foot the bag which lay upon the floor beside them, "then I feel that, could my life expiate the sin which you have committed in violating the laws of the land, how willingly would I offer it; but, Robert, I have learned of how little avail are my wishes, either with you or with father, and I despise myself at times for loving you both as I do. Can you wonder that it is so?" He made no answer, Mary continued—

"Oh! if you would but promise me now, to earn your living righteously and honestly, I would go with you to the end of the earth. I would labor for you from hour to hour, and from day to day, without murmuring. I would toil ceaselessly for the glittering gold, and never breathe one word of complaint, however wearied. Oh! try me, dear Robert, and we shall both be happier than we have been for many a long day." He looked up into her face with an earnest—almost a pitying gaze—he traced no signs of passionate love—no drooping lid—no quivering lip—he read naught, save the deep devotion which a sister might feel, and trusting to that one glance, he said—

"Mary, it cannot be; but now, while your heart is warm with a sister's love, I want you to listen to me."

For the first time that evening, Mary's lashes drooped beneath his gaze, and a peach-like blush spread over her clear, brunette complexion. He marked it, and paused.

"Mary," he questioned, "you love me as if I were your brother, do you not?"

She hesitated—a bright light flashed from the clear depths of her hazel eyes, and in a voice thrillingly low, she answered—

"No, Robert; I thank God every day that you are not my brother, for then we could never be to each other as we shall now, one day, most assuredly be, if our lives are spared."

Oh! how beautiful—how transcendently beautiful did Mary look, as she uttered these words. How pure the smile of confidence that wreathed her lips as she murmured—

"No, dear Robert; thank God that you are not my brother, for then I could never be the wife which you so long ago promised me that I should be." She rested her head upon his shoulder, and looked up into his face. What read she there that made her spring so suddenly from her seat, and bow herself before him, gazing earnestly into his eyes? How wildly she looked as he bent over her, with his pallid face and his trembling voice, whispering, "my poor Mary, this can never be."

"And why—tell me why, Robert? No suffering—no poverty—no crime can ever separate me from you—no prison-walls so strong but I can find my way through—no dungeon so dark or deep but I could share it with you—then tell me why it can never be?"

"Because, my darling, since I have become older, I have only thought of you as a sister—because I have, this night, come to tell you that we must separate: for, Mary, I married since we parted. I had not suspected—" but Robert paused, for fearfully pale was the face before him—the crimson fled from the full, red lip, and the dark, hazel eyes grew fixed and glassy.

He lifted her in his arms, and bore her tenderly to the broad settee—he sprinkled her brow with water—he called upon her by every endearing name he could imagine—but wan and lifeless she lay before him—not a breath heaving the folds of her dress, not one faint quivering of the drooping lash with its graceful fringe.

"Oh! good God! my Mary is dead," cried Robert, as he found every effort unavailing to bring the color to her pallid cheeks. The hours passed on—in despair he threw open the window, and fastened back the lattice. Morning was already breaking, but the clouds hung in such heavy masses over the little glen, that Robert thought it was only the faint moonlight, and he knelt beside Mary chafing her cold hands and calling on her piteously to awake.

Already a party of ten or twelve were stealing through the woodlands upon the right of the cottage. Dismounting from their horses, they fastened them to saplings, and with Squire Merton at their head, stole noiselessly around the base of the hill, and came in full view of the cottage. Still Robert unmindful, bent beside

Mary's rigid form, striving to find some pulsation, however faint, to give him hope. A well known voice aroused him, and looking up, he saw the face of the Squire, surrounded by several others, peering through the window.

"Your day's over, young man," said the Squire, in a taunting tone. "You can come with us."

"I do not choose to," replied Robert, as he seized the bag, and quietly passed out of the door leading to the cellar.

"Around to the back of the house," screamed Squire Merton, his face reddening with passion. The men swung their unwieldy forms down the crags, in no apparent hurry, with the exception of the two officers, who were agile and sprightly enough. They, followed by the burly Squire, made for the wood-path, but their agility did not serve them, for when they reached the falls, they saw Peets bowing to them on the other side. He had crossed the rude bridge, and pulling it after him, there was no means of following.

The Squire, vexed at having been so outwitted, vented his ill-humor upon those around, declaring that he believed the half of them were in league with the counterfeiters. But they paid no attention to his mutterings, and returning to the cottage, the police searched the house from garret to cellar, but no trace of counterfeiting was found. It was broad day-light when they returned to the room where Robert had torn himself away from Mary.

They had passed her, supposing she had slept, but now there was something so deathly in the repose of the young girl, with the light from the open window streaming full upon her up-turned face, that one of the men stooped over, and put his ear to her mouth.

"The girl is dead," he said, turning to his companion, "there has been murder here." A cold shiver ran through the frames of both. Leaning out of the window, one of them called to the group, who were waiting orders to return to the village.

"Is there any physician hereabouts?" he asked.

"Yes, one not half a mile from here, on the Glenwood road."

"Take your horse, and gallop for him quick then, for there has been foul work here."

Nearly an hour had passed, when an old physician, saddle bags in hand, entered the room, while those around the lifeless form fell back to give him room. He pressed his ear to Mary's breast, then taking from his saddle bags, a small vial, he poured a portion of its contents into a spoon, and forced it between the rigid

but beautiful lips. Drawing out a lancet, he commenced rolling up the sleeve of her dress.

"There ain't no use in that," whispered one to another.

"No, no," sighed the answerer, "she'll never see daylight again, and it will about kill her father, for he sot stores by her."

"And no wonder," replied a third, "they say she could sign the bills better nor himself—she's a proper smart looking girl too, and I always thought she and Mister Bob would make a match of it, they seemed so fond of each other."

At this moment they all gave a half scream of surprise, for upright upon the settee, sat the deathly-looking girl they had been lamenting as dead. Her wildly glittering eyes rested upon the forms shrinking from before her, and her pale lips moved, as if she could have inquired the cause, but they gave no sound.

"We thought there had been murder here," said one, advancing. Mary moaned, clenching her hand tightly over her now painfully throbbing heart.

"Do you feel better, child?" questioned the physician, clasping her cold fingers between his own.

"I shall be soon, no doubt, if I am left alone," she replied, in a husky voice. Some of the group hastened to re-ignite the fire, and after expressing their kind wishes, they all left. The physician soon after took his departure, attributing her faint to fright; and then Mary sank down upon the settee, and covering her face with both hands, she rocked to and fro. When she removed her hands, the expression of her face was calm and rigid as death itself. All day long she sat, scarcely varying her position, and the fire upon the hearth ceased to blaze—it smoked and smouldered in its ruins, 'till one by one the brands fell back, blackened and crumbling; and one by one the embers died away, until not a spark of warmth remained. Even so Mary felt all hope die from her bosom, and even so she wished her life could pass away. Twilight stole on, and deepened into darkness, and still with locked hands and pallid lips, Mary rocked monotonously upon her seat. She heard the outside door open and shut cautiously, the latch of the inner one was moved, then the door opened, and Robert approached and sat beside her. She knew it was him, and yet she remained motionless.

"Mary, how I run the risk of being taken, and imprisoned, and will you breathe no word of kindness or of welcome to me!"

She heard the appeal, and her lips moved as if she would fain have answered.

"Speak to me, Mary—for the love of God

speak to me, even if you reproach me, I can bear all, anything except this horrid silence;" and as he spoke, he sought to pass his arm around her waist, as he had done the night before. Then, Mary rose to her feet, and her form towered before him in the darkness.

"Never seek to touch me again, Robert, if you care for my respect," she said.

"Can I not be a brother to you, Mary, and as a brother, love you as I have ever done?"

"No," she answered, in a firm voice, "our paths are henceforth separate—you have chosen yours, leave me to mine."

She bent over the fire-place, and drawing the embers together, re-kindled the lifeless brands. Even so, with words of love, did Robert strive to re-animate the faded and withered hopes which had died in Mary's heart, but still he received the changeless answer—"you have chosen your path—leave me to mine."

"This frigidity is not natural to you, Mary—this coldness is assumed," replied Robert, and again he sought to draw her nearer.

With what a queenly air did Mary rise, and turn herself toward him—how her dark eyes flashed, and her pallid lips crimsoned as she spoke.

"Robert, I assume nothing, and I am as nothing henceforth to you; all that you could say, if you were to talk for years, would never change me, although I neither blame nor reproach you. Now, leave me, I would be alone."

This was said neither pettishly nor hurriedly, but her voice was hoarse with emotion, and her frame quivered with weakness.

Robert had known her from a child to be wilful and obstinate, but he had never seen her so calm before; and, as the stood thus, resolute and dignified, a sentiment of respect stole in, and nestled side by side, with the brotherly affection, which he could truly say he bore her. He stooped and kissed her hand tenderly, almost reverently.

"I must leave you now, Mary—I had hoped you would be willing to carry a message for me to Lucy, for I know she is anxiously waiting to hear from me. If we go west, it is time that she knew it, but I cannot expect you to be willing to help us."

As he spoke, Mary's eyes flashed with a strange light, and when he had finished, the rigid expression had departed, and every line, every feature was moulded into tenderness. How many—how very many times had she plead with her father and Robert, to give up their criminal life, and begin in the boundless west a new existence.

Now, the hope that this was his intention, re-animated her whole being, and with a sudden movement, she grasped Robert's hand, saying,

"Promise me, that you will go to the west, and I will leave no means untried to make you both happy—promise never again to lead such a dishonorable life, and I will always stay beside you to cheer and encourage with a sister's love; for Robert, believe me, it was this one hope—the hope of influencing you to give up these ways, which made me dream of becoming your wife. I awoke from it so rudely and suddenly, that I thought I had lost all care for you—for life—for anything; but, if you will make me this promise, I shall be happy again."

"You shall be happy, then, my sister, for I have fully and firmly resolved to lead a better life. Now, what about Lucy—how can I contrive to meet her?"

"You forget, Robert, that you have not told me who Lucy is," said Mary, making a strange effort to smile, which plainly showed that she was deceiving herself into a calmness which her heart could never feel.

Robert noted the smile, and he appreciated the motive which caused the effort, although it had succeeded so poorly. He answered quickly, as one who sought to avoid the subject, rather than to dwell upon it.

"Lucy Merton is my wife, Mary—we were married in Albany, while she was there on a visit. I got a letter from Miller the same day, saying Powers had been arrested for passing counterfeit notes at Glenwood, and lodged in the Springfield jail, and that I must come on and help get him out. I lost the letter—the con-founded tavern-keeper found it—examined a note I had paid him that morning, and started for the police. Old Lynch's son was in the bar-room when he read the letter—Lynch at the village, I mean, you know he was in with us a spell; well, he told me, and I was off quicker than you could say Jack Robinson. Lynch took the stage, and brought on the note to you, telling you to keep your father in the next evening, for that I had especial business with him, and should be with you before sunset, if nothing happened. When I reached the village, it was nearly sundown of the second day, for my horse was wearied with the long journey. I stopped to see if I could get a glimpse of Ellis, and put him on his guard, but he had gone to the cave at Rock Hill. I'm afraid they won't be able to get Powers out, even if we escape."

"Oh, Robert, I wish we were all through with it."

"So do I, with my whole heart, for Lucy's

sake, even more than for my own. She is a sweet creature, Mary, and is completely devoted to me."

His eyes were moist with unbidden tears, as he added in a low, deep tone, "God knows I love her too well to ever be willing to bring disgrace upon her. It was the memory of her innocence which made me cast that bag of false coins down in the foaming waters yonder, and Mary, they are the last my hands shall ever touch."

At this moment there was a rustling amidst the shrubbery by the window, both turned their eyes in that direction, but the noise had ceased. Another instant, and the door was forced open, and Robert vainly strove to free himself from the strong arms which grasped him.

Before Mary had time to think, she was alone. She heard the sound of the wheels which bore him from her, grating over the pebbly and frozen road, and in despair she knelt upon the oaken floor, and wept long and bitterly.

Stephen Billings rode slowly away from the cottage keeping the road to the right, until he came to a narrow lane, which wound up the hill. This he followed for the length of three quarters of a mile, when he reached a small, dilapidated building, with a ruined out-shed adjoining. Here he dismounted, and after tying the horse under the shed, he knocked repeatedly at the door, before there was any sign of life within. At length through the patched panes came a feeble glimmering of light.

"What's wanting?" cried a voice from within.

"News from the village," was his only answer, and the door was quickly unbarred. The man who opened the door was in the prime of life, with florid complexion and sandy hair. He carried a lantern in his hand, by the light of which he conducted Billings through a small deserted-looking room, and down a crazy old staircase into a cheerless apartment in the basement. Here he opened a trap-door in the side of the wall, and they both entered a large room, where some half dozen men were busily at work, amidst dies and rolls and other implements of counterfeiting.

"What's started you out this time of night?" inquired one, as he entered.

Billings briefly explained the cause, and then they all gathered around the fire to concert some way for the escape of Powell.

"You see, Peets can have nothing to do with it now—he'll have enough to keep him busy to take care of himself. It's a pity they've got him implicated. Who wrote that letter, anyhow?" said Billings.

"I wrote it," replied Miller, the man who had opened the door—"Peets is so complete at a disguise, and I had a plan for him."

"Well, I thought we were in pretty comfortable quarters here; but now we shall have to pull up stakes."

"Not a bit of it," answered Lynch, who had come up from the village that morning—"not a bit of it! Just wait until Peets has been closeted alone with the Squire awhile—he'll bring him to terms, I warrant."

"Why, how so?"

"Well, you see, Peets, when he was in Albany. After all, I don't know as I had ought to tell, for it's a sort of a secret."

"It's no time for secrets now," said Billings—"tell what you know, so that we can make up our minds what to do, for now them police officers have got on our track, and I am afraid they will hunt us all out."

"Well, when Peets was in Albany, the Squire's daughter was there, too, and Peets, he over-persuaded the girl to marry him, without waiting for her father's consent. She thinks he's a prince, I believe; and I should 'nt blame her, if she did, for he threw his money away upon her, like one. The fact is, Peets is down-right dead in love with her, although he began the affair three months ago, in a frolic."

"Now we are in a scrape," said Billings, in an angry tone—"the Squire's mortal proud, and he won't leave a stone unturned, 'till he lodges us all in jail. It will be the easiest thing in the world for him to git 'em divorced."

"But, supposin' she won't consent—how then?"

"She won't be long about it, when she finds out who her prince is, I reckon," answered Billings, moodily.

The conversation then turned upon Powell. Miller's plan was the most approved, and it was finally agreed that he should carry it out himself. It was early morning when he left Rock Hill on Billings' horse.

In the afternoon of the next day, a stylish-looking carriage, drawn by two spirited steeds, drew up in front of the hotel in Glenwood. The driver dismounted, and assisted an elderly looking gentleman with grey hair, and somewhat gouty, from the vehicle. He hobbled into the bar-room, and after seating himself in an arm-chair, and placing his tender limb upon a seat opposite, he called for a bottle of the best Port. The landlord, who was duly impressed with his guest's importance, bustled about, and soon had everything arranged for his comfort. In less than an hour the frigidity of the stranger's demeanor had somewhat thawed; and the host, all

smiles and bows, was listening with eager attention to his few remarks. At length, he spoke of the counterfeiters who had been so successful in passing spurious notes in the neighborhood.

"One of the chaps passed some off to me," he said, "but I was pretty sure he was one of 'em from his looks, so I examined the money close, and sure enough I was right; the fellow's in jail now."

"Ah, indeed! Why you were very discerning. When I was an attorney in York State, I used to often get taken in by the rascals. I have had more than one fee paid me in their good-for-nothing money. I should like to know how you told."

"Well, I'll show you," and the landlord drew a wallet from his pocket, from which he took two or three bills which were tied together, and after spreading them out upon the table, he drew another bill from his pocket, and placed it along side.

"Now can you tell which is which?" said he.

The stranger adjusted his spectacles, and bent over the table with an earnest gaze.

"Well, really, I can't see any difference; supposing you point it out; but first bring me another bottle of Port, if you please—my long, cold ride has made me thirsty."

The landlord arose with alacrity, and going into an adjoining room, ordered a boy to bring up another bottle from the cellar.

Returning to his seat, he commenced pointing out the difference between the true bill and the false ones.

"You see," said he, "the face of this female figure is a little blurred; don't it strike you as being more so than this one?"

"I can't say it does—I don't think either of them blurred; a little worn, that's all. They look both alike to me."

"Well, here's another difference; the word five stretches farther across—don't you see it does?"

"Let me see," said the stranger, taking it from his hand, and turning to the window to conceal the smile that was playing around his mouth; "I can't see a mite of difference; but then, my eye-sight's rather failing," and he handed it back again.

"Well, I can't see very plain; here, you take one of the counterfeiters, and the real one, and I'll tell you in a minnit, which is which."

The stranger placed the two together on the table, while the landlord's back was turned. He looked around; eyed them attentively for a moment, and then said he was puzzled himself.

"Have you ever showed them to any of the bank officers?" inquired the stranger.

"No, I never thought it was necessary. I really supposed there was more difference."

"Well, it's my advice to you, as a member of the bar, to take three over to the town where the bank is, for they can tell in a moment whether they are genuine or not, and all I have got to say, if they are counterfeiters, they are the best I ever saw!"

Soon afterward the stranger's carriage was brought around—the driver helped him in, and they rode away, leaving the landlord looking very disconcertedly over his bank bills.

"Eh! John, Powell's as good as out," said Miller, as they drove out of the village. "I did the business neatly. At my invitation, he helped me to drink the bottle of Port, and while he went to get another, I slipped the genuines into the places of the others, which I pocketed. Oh! Lord, I thought I should have roared, when he began to point out the difference to me."

The next day the worthy host of the Glenwood Hotel rode over to Springfield to transact some business, and while there, he stopped into the bank, and found, greatly to his surprise, that the notes were all good. The same day Powell was liberated, and as the landlord made a handsome apology, and even offered to return the bills, Powell generously concluded not to prosecute him. Fear of other witnesses might have had somewhat to do in deterring him; but, at any rate, the landlord gave him full credit for his forbearance.

The same evening that Robert was arrested by the Albany police, the little family of Squire Merton were gathered around the cheerful fire in his office.

Lucy alone sat back from the rest in the recessed window. Her delicate face, generally lacking in expression, was now thoughtfully sad. Hurried into the important step which she had taken, without the advice or consent of any friends, she now had sufficient leisure to think of her folly. With the romance of youth she had endowed her lover with a thousand virtues which he did not possess, and it was these imaginary virtues which had won her love. She doubted not his truth, and fully believed him when he told her that the reason he wished to be married secretly, was because his parents would oppose his marriage.

What was her surprise then, when upon this evening, without any warning, he was borne manacled into her presence? She started instantly to her feet—the blood rushed in torrents to her face, then died away—leaving it white as the snowy curtains of the casement, against which she now leaned for support.

His eyes hurriedly scanned the group about

the fire, and when he found she was not of the number, relief was evident in his face. Quick as thought, Lucy re-seated herself, and drew the thick folds of the curtains about her.

Mrs. Merton and her children immediately left the room, as was their custom when any one came upon business. As the door shut, Lucy heard a younger brother say—

"They've caught one of the counterfeiters, I guess."

"A counterfeiter! my husband a counterfeiter! No, it cannot be," thought Lucy, as tremblingly she watched from her place of concealment the form in which she had enshrined so much that was noble and good.

She listened to the conversation, and was too surely convinced of the truth of the accusation. How bitterly swept the torrent of mortified pride and wounded love through her bosom! She saw, that by one injudicious act, she had prepared for herself a life-time of never-ending sorrow and regret. But, with the proof of his criminality, the love which her childish fancy had yielded to him, vanished from her heart. She despised him for the deception he had practised—she also hated him when she thought that he now possessed the power of calling her his.

"Father, can I see him one moment alone?" she said, starting to her feet suddenly.

"Why, my child! what are you thinking about?" he answered, as he looked at her in amazement.

"I will tell you all another time, father: but grant me this if you love me."

"Have you known him before, Lucy?"

"Yes, father, and under very different circumstances. It cannot hurt any one to grant my request—do, dear father!"

Mr. Merton looked at the officers—they smiled, and bowed their consent, and the three crossed the hall into the opposite room.

"Robert, is this accusation true?" she said, looking at him almost scornfully.

"Too true, Lucy; but God knows, if I am once free again, I will lead a different life. With your love to cheer and encourage me, I shall become a better man."

"My love! Do you for a moment think that I have wasted it on a criminal?"

"Ah! Lucy, do not let me hear such words from your lips—remember, my darling, I am your husband," and he approached her respectfully, his face pale with emotion.

"Come not a single step nearer," said Lucy, resolutely, "but listen to me while I say that, with my own consent, you will never again approach me, even as near as you are now. I care

no more for you than I do for the dust I trample on!"

"Lucy! Lucy! you cannot—you do not mean this!"

"Every word that I have said I mean, and more—a thousand times more! But though I despise you with my whole heart, I offer you the means of escape. Promise me, never to breathe of our marriage—never to claim me as your wife, and I will help you to free yourself. Will you promise?"

"I cannot—indeed you are asking too much of one who loves you with his whole soul. In calmer moments you will think differently of this, for I am not all evil, and for the sake of the good within me, you will forget my error."

"Never! never! I tell you. Will you not believe me?"

He had no time to answer, before Mr. Merton opened the door.

"One moment more, father, and I will tell you all," Lucy said. The door closed. Cautiously she raised the window opposite.

"Quick—you have no time to lose—but remember, I do this from no love to you."

"Listen to me one moment, Lucy."

"No, not a moment, not a word," she replied, "if you wish for freedom, it is before you—if not, stay where you are."

"I entreat of you, Lucy, to listen."

"Speak another word, and I call my father!" was her determined answer. In the stony expression of the large eyes turned full upon him, Robert read his fate. He had not dreamed of meeting with such a strong, stern spirit, in the delicate form that clung to him so trustingly the morning of their strange bridal. His moral susceptibilities, blunted by the life he had led, prevented him from reading what her feelings would be, when she should discover his real character. He trusted to the strength of woman's love, little thinking how fragile a thing it is, when not based upon respect.

He heard the hand upon the latch again, and without one farewell word—one relenting look from Lucy—he sprang through the window, and made his way as rapidly as he could with his fettered hands, through the shrubbery, to the hill-side.

When Squire Merton opened the door, he gazed for an instant, without speaking, at the open window, and then would have given an alarm had not Lucy placed one hand over his mouth, as she said—

"Father—do not say a word until I tell you all. That bold, bad man—that criminal—is—oh! father, how shall I say it?"

Mr. Merton closed the door, and sat down by his heart-wrung daughter.

"Lucy, tell me what all this means, and do not look so strange and wild, my child. You surely cannot have loved that man, and have helped him to escape?"

"Love him! no, father, *I hate him*; but I helped him to escape because, oh! father—because he is my husband. I, your heart-broken Lucy—your sinful, misguided daughter is that man's wedded wife!"

Mr. Merton horrified, started to his feet, but struck with compassion for the suffering face before him, and passionately fond of her, his only daughter, he forebore expressing the anger which he felt.

"How can this be possible, my poor child? when—where—how could it have happened?"

"Ah! father, pity me."

"I do, my child—but why if you do not love him, did you help him to escape?"

"Because, father, I wanted him to promise never to claim me as his wife."

"But, Lucy, did you not know that you could be divorced from him?"

"No, no, I had no time to think of that, but thank God if I can."

"Mr. Merton, after explaining as much as he thought proper to the officers, found no difficulty in bribing them to silence, under the circumstances, and they departed fully satisfied that they had made as much money out of the affair, as if they had succeeded in imprisoning Peets.

Poor Lucy Merton did not seek to shield herself from blame. She told everything to her parents, but her proud spirit was crushed to the earth by the sudden blow. Her father's forgiveness, and her mother's loving sympathy, had no power to heal its wounds, and but a few weeks elapsed before Robert heard of the death of the impulsive and trusting being whom he had deceived."

Years have passed since these events, and now amidst Ontario's lofty and beautiful forests, there is a little village of scattered cottages, belonging almost entirely to men who, at one period of their lives, made their living by violating the laws of their country. Influenced by the good example of Robert and Mary's father, they have followed one by one, and have settled down into useful members of society.

The unwearied Mary was the germ of all this good, and Robert was not many months in appreciating the qualities, which in their new way of living, found such a happy development.

Gradually there stole into his heart a sincere love for the one, who, though educated under such

perverting influences, had proved herself worthy of a higher sphere.

The memory of his errors—the errors which had lost to him the innocent love of the victim of his deception, chastened his wild and exuberant spirit, and many were the heart-felt sighs which he yielded to the past. Still dearer in his thoughtful sadness did Robert become to Mary; but when after a year from Lucy's death, he told her, in honest and manly words, his love, and asked her to become his wife, she firmly, and without hesitation refused.

In vain he plead—no entreaties moved her; and Robert felt more than ever the punishment of the sins of his youth.

Another year passed slowly on. Powell had joined the settlers, and Mary's beauty and goodness had captivated his heart. He became a daily visitor at her father's cottage, and Robert noticed with undisguised sorrow, how cordial was the greeting which Mary always gave him.

One spring morning Robert entered the little cottage just as Powell passed out.

"I have come, Mary, to bid you good-bye." He spoke so sadly and earnestly, that Mary dropped her sewing and looked up with eager inquiry.

"You surely will not leave us—your business, I mean, Robert,"

"That I have already disposed of, and I have nothing else to keep me, for now that I have lost your love, I care for nothing else."

Mary's long fringed lids drooped over her eyes—once with her pure heart, and innocence of the ways of the world, she would have flown to him and told him how truly—how fervently he was beloved; but the sad lesson she had learned, had taught her to conceal the love which she well knew she should never cease to feel.

"I have watched Powell's increasing happiness with bitterness of heart, Mary, and I must leave this place until I can feel willing to see you his—but I am afraid that will never be, and so, Mary, I must bid you good-bye forever." Robert extended his hand.

"Will you not give me one parting word," he said.

"Do not go, Robert—I do not love Powell—indeed you do not know me; you never will."

"I now you well enough to love you devotedly, dearest Mary," said Robert, as he drew near her.

Her words had given him hope, and he looked earnestly in her face to see if he could read any traces of the love he knew she had once borne him.

Their eyes met, and he did not look in vain.

"Oh, Mary, dare I ask you to be mine again?"

He encircled her waist with his arm, and as in the days so long past, her head was pillowed upon his shoulder.

Their marriage was soon celebrated; but Powell, who had been refused by Mary that same morning on which she accepted Robert, left the village without waiting to be present at the ceremony.

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## THE VALLEY FARM; OR, THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AN ORPHAN.

[Entered, according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1850, by Charles J. Peterson, as the proprietor, in the Clerk's Office, of the District Court of the U. S., in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.]

I was about four years old when an event occurred which influenced my whole future life.

I had not seen my mother for several days. I recollect that I cried frequently for her, and that I was put off with the excuses common on such occasions, until one day, on being again denied her, I went into a passion of shrieks and tears. The result was that I sobbed myself to sleep.

When I woke, my Aunt Sarah was standing over me. It was not long before I remembered the cause of my sorrow, and I began to cry again.

"I want to see my mamma."

"Hush! you must not make a noise," said my aunt.

"I want to see my mamma."

"Be still, child," cried my aunt, shaking her finger at me, "be still, I say, and you shall see your mother."

I had always had a sort of childish antipathy to this relative—why, I know not, unless it was that her hard nature expressed itself in her face even then—and nothing would have induced me to obey her now but that she promised I should see my parent. I hushed my cries at once.

She hastily dressed me in my best white frock. I thought it strange, for I knew it was not Sunday, but I supposed perhaps there was to be company.

"Now you must be very still," said my aunt, as she smoothed down my frock, "and not make the least noise. Your mamma is very ill."

I did not entirely understand her, but I felt that it was something terrible, and my little heart was moved. I wiped the last tear from my eye with my hand.

My aunt lifted me in her arms and carried me along the corridor. I expected her to turn into my mother's usual sleeping-apartment, but she went on to the end of the passage, and noiselessly opening a door, entered a spacious chamber, which I had rarely been in before, and which was what they called in that part of the country, the spare room.

My little senses had been fully aroused by a something in my aunt's manner, which, now that I think of it, must have been solemnity, and nothing escaped my observation. It is extraordinary how children will remember things which some great

event has stamped upon their memory. I can see the old furniture in that room as clearly as if it was before me now. The high, walnut press; the escrutoire that had been my father's; the straight-backed arm-chair, with seats that my grandmother had worked; and the heavy, ancient bed, with its carved canopy, that had been brought over from England when my ancestors first settled at the Valley Farm.

Now too I remember the faces in the room. My uncle was there, and his wife, and I thought I had discovered why I had been dressed up, for as they lived some miles off, and rarely visited us, they were considered as company whenever they did come. Another gentleman was there, whom I had a faint remembrance of having seen before. The whole were standing about at the foot of the bed the curtains of which were drawn up; and they were looking at something in it. I looked too, and saw my mother.

She was lying partially propped up with pillows, but so pale and emaciated, that at first I scarcely distinguished her from the snow-white linen. Her eyes, however, were the same that so often looked love upon me: I should have recognized them if all else had been changed, though they were now luminously bright and large. I reached forth my hands, and half sprang from my aunt's arms.

"Mamma, dear mamma!" I cried.

"Hush!" said my aunt, drawing me back—"you must not weary your mother."

I looked at my aunt, and then turned pleadingly to my parent. She glanced beseechingly to my aunt, who looked at the strange gentleman—he was the doctor. The latter nodded. At this my aunt stooped down, and held me close to my mother, so that I could put my little hands on her face, which I did, stroking it fondly as I used to when she was lulling me to sleep.

But as she thus yielded, my aunt said—

"You are over-tasking yourself, sister. The child will tease you."

Never shall I forget my mother's look—it was partly one of surprise, partly one of melancholy reproof—as she said, faintly, speaking in short sentences, and with difficulty,

"It is for the last time, and I think I should have been better if I had seen her oftener—dear, dear Mary!" she continued, as with infinite difficulty she put one thin, transparent arm around me, and drawing me gently toward her, kissed me over and over again.

My mother must have been very beautiful; I have often heard since that she was; but I felt it, on that occasion, child as I was. Her eyes, indeed her whole face, beamed on me with such divine affection, such an out-gushing of the entire soul in love, that, for years afterward, her countenance, as then seen, was to me the type of an angel. It used to haunt my dreams. I often wished, when awake, that I was a painter, that I might embody on canvass that look. It must have been beautiful, and with the highest expression of the soul, to have produced such an impression on a girl but four years old.

When she complained at not having seen me before, and drew me thus to her, I felt my little heart gush over with affection to her. Indeed, I believe I had always been a very affectionate child.

"Oh! dear mamma," I said, endeavoring to put my little arm around her, "I love you so much. My pretty mamma, I do love you."

Big tears began to gather in her eyes. I recollect them, for they flowed on my cheek, and mine rose in sympathy, though I knew no reason then why they should.

At this my aunt would have drawn me away, uttering in a reproving way the word "sister!" but my mother clung to me faintly.

"Not yet, not yet, Sarah," she said. "I shall never see her again in this world—let her stay a little longer."

"Let her stay," said the physician, in a husky voice. "It can't hurt Mrs. Lennox."

My mother gave a glance of thankfulness to the last speaker, and then hugged me closer and closer, murmuring words of endearment mingled with others of a different character, no doubt words of prayer. And I, awed and melted alike, feeling there was something terrible in all this, yet conscious above everything else of the delight of seeing my mother again, kissed and fondled her, now pushing her hair back under her cap, now stroking her face, and occasionally looking around on the spectators to see what it all meant.

"Now, sister," said my aunt, at last, "it must come to an end. God will provide for the poor thing, and we will do our best for her." And she drew me away.

But my mother convulsively clasped me, and, in broken language, mingled with sobs and tears, prayed.

"Almighty God!" she said, "Saviour of the world, protect and bless my child—my fatherless, motherless babe!" Then she kissed me, sobbed aloud, and, suddenly letting go her hold, burst into a torrent of tears; while my aunt hurried me from the room.

I can remember stretching out my little hands toward her, and crying as if my heart would break, while my eyes remained fixed on my mother as long as I could see her. Her eyes, through all their tears, followed mine, until the spectators, hurrying to soothe her I suppose, shut her out from my sight. My aunt held me tight, for I struggled the harder when the door was closed, and almost ran with me along the corridor and down the stair-case, until we reached the kitchen, where, I remember, she carried me to a window overlooking the brook, and tapping the pane, tried to direct my attention toward some cattle standing in the water. It was one of the first really kind acts I had known her to do, at least one of the few that had the effect of kindness on me; for I have no doubt she was frequently trying hardest to be kind, in her own way, when I thought her most cruel.

Childhood soon forgets its sorrows, or, rather is attracted to new things. In a little while I was engrossed by the scene before me, and my sobs gradually ceased, though, occasionally, I would remember my mother, and cry to be carried back to her. At this my aunt would renew her exertions to divert my attention. And thus, between sobbing and being amused, I gradually cried myself to sleep a second time, and did not awake until the following morning.

Then, my first thought was of my mother. Until lately I had slept with her, and I still retained my old habit of feeling for her when I opened my eyes. This morning, as for more than a week, I missed her. I began to cry. My aunt was immediately by my side. I disliked this woman instinctively, I have said, and on seeing her, instead of the dear one I missed, I shrieked aloud—

"Take me to my mother!" I cried, passionately. "I want my mamma. Go away, Aunt Sarah. Mamma! mamma!"

I must have uttered this invocation piteously, for I saw tears in my aunt's eyes, the only time I had ever seen them there. "Poor child!" she said. Then addressing me, her usually hard voice softening, she continued—

"Mary, my dear, your mother is dead!"

I did not know what the words meant, but they silenced me at once. There was something awful in them—or perhaps it was the change in my aunt's manner—which made my little heart stop beating for the instant. I gazed with my large

bright eyes in wonder on the speaker, the tears stopping midway on my cheek. She looked at me for a moment, and then, by a sudden impulse, clasped me to her bosom.

"Poor, penniless orphan," she sobbed, "I will be a mother to you."

I suffered her to do with me the rest of that day as she pleased. I believe there is a magnetism in kindness, at least for children: and I was, for the time, almost as obedient to my aunt, as I had been to my mother. But I was sadly puzzled at many things: at the darkened rooms, the noiseless steps, and at everybody's picking me up, kissing me, and calling me an orphan.

I saw my mother once more—at least they told me it was her. She lay in her coffin on the bed, a white cap plaited around her face, her hands plaited around with cambric, the dress plaited to her feet. I could not comprehend it. The face was that of my parent, and yet there was something about it strange; there was a little of the old, sweet smile, but the look of love was wanting: I gazed on it in wonder, mingled with terror. They told me to kiss it. I bent down mechanically, and touched my lips to hers. The cold, icy feeling I shall never forget. I started back, yet I did not cry out. They carried me from the room, and I recollect stealing, that night, into my mother's ordinary sleeping-apartment, to see if she was there; for somehow I could not think it was my mother, lying so cold and rigid, all alone in that grand old chamber. My aunt found me on the bed, crying piteously, and calling "mamma, mamma, dear mamma!"

I remember too, the funeral: the crowd of strangers; my being dressed in black and led into the spare chamber; the carrying the coffin from the room; the getting into a carriage; the ride to the church-yard, and the sound of the clods falling into the grave. It was all strange to me and incomprehensible. For weeks afterward, I would, at times, wish to see my mother, and go over the whole house crying, in search of her; but gradually this wore off, and, at last, I recurred to these scenes I have just related, as incidents of some sorrowful dream.

My real existence now began. Hitherto my life had passed in a happiness so unbroken that it left no impress on my memory; but now I was to read darker and sterner lessons. The Valley Farm passed into the hands of my uncle. Had the babe survived which my mother bore, he would have inherited the estate, for it was entailed on the male heir, and had been, as the lawyers call it, in *abeyance*, from the death of my father, some months' before, until it was known whether his posthumous child would be a

son. All this I learned when I grew old enough to understand it, but at present, I only knew that my uncle came to live at the farm as its owner. Young as I was, it was not long before I discovered from the talk of the servants, that I was now only a dependant, where before I had been the principal personage after my mother; and if I had not learned it from the servants, I soon should have discovered it from the altered treatment toward me.

It is true I was not abused, at least in the common acceptance of the term, by either my uncle or his wife. They simply neglected me. Perhaps they grudged me the little food I ate; I can explain in no other way their utter indifference; but they said nothing; and I am sure passed with the neighbors for very excellent and benevolent people, in providing an orphan with a home. My uncle would sometimes push me rudely aside, when I chanced to be in his way; and my aunt would order me carried up to bed, when I made more noise than she liked; but neither ever proceeded to active oppression.

I was left almost entirely to the care of my Aunt Sarah, the one who, in a moment of relenting, had promised to be a mother to me. I can draw her portrait now as accurately as if she sat before me. She was about the middle height, tending to *en bon point*, with a face from which all the softer emotions had long since departed, if indeed they had ever existed there. Her temper was hard and severe, and so too were her principles. She professed religion, but I now think she must have been a formalist, though a misguided one, for she was certainly sincere. She tried earnestly to do her duty, at least according to her notion of duty, and had no charity for others who fell short, or who differed with her in opinion. She was punctual at church, and punctual at morning prayer; she gave a certain sum, which she saved by strict economy, to support a heathen boy in India; but I have seen her drive a beggar-woman with a child from the gate, on the plea, that in this country, no one but the undeserving need come to want. I believe there are such people yet, though there were more in that staid, formal day of which I write.

My Aunt Sarah took the entire charge of my education. Imagine the difference between a little, sensitive creature, such as I was, dying for sympathy and affection, and this severe, exacting, repellant woman, whose heart was withered, and who regarded life as a mere affair of duty. She did not comprehend me, and I am sure I never understood her. I was often in tears at words of reproof, which I thought unjust, and she regarded as deserved.

Our first difficulty was with the catechism. I had a certain portion of this to learn every week, and read to her; and though I most frequently knew my task, there were times when I did not. A butterfly floating by, or a bird skimming into a neighboring thicket, would too often lure me from my book. At other times, some one of the neighboring children would lend me a fairy-book, and I would sit and devour the story of Beauty and the Beast; or be reading about the wonderful lamp of Aladdin, when I should have been committing to memory the dry, distasteful catechism. I fear religion suffers, more than we think, in similar attempts to force children to learn what they cannot either understand or love, when presented in this hard, didactic shape. The manner in which our Lord taught by parables ought to convince us of this error. I was never weary of the gospels, but the catechism was my abhorrence, as it is of children generally.

When I did not know my lesson, I was either sent to bed without my supper, or shut up in a closet that opened into the kitchen. But these were slight trials to others that were coming.

I was about seven years old when my uncle's first child was born. He had been married for ten years without offspring; and the little stranger was hailed with rapture by both him and the mother. I became now even more in the way than before. It was a sweet, beautiful child, and I could have loved it dearly, but I was not suffered even to touch it, and so my heart, that yearned for sympathy, was driven back into itself.

A little half-grown girl was provided to help to nurse the child, and this person, perceiving of how little consideration I was, began to tyrannize over me. By this time, long continued ill-usage had hardened me, and I now often turned upon my persecutors, instead of going away to weep alone as I did once.

One day some candy which had been bought for the baby was missing, and the mother, knowing that no one but the servant girl and myself had been in the room, charged me with the theft of it. I had seen Julia—for that was her name—committing the depredation herself, though she thought my back was turned, nor was it the first time that I had known her to be guilty of similar acts.

"I did not see—no," I added, correcting myself, haughtily, "I did not take the candy."

"Oh!" said the mother, "you *saw* the candy, did you? And yet you did not take it," she added, ironically. "Then pray, who did—did baby?"

"No! Julia took it!"

At this the girl flushed red to her very temples,

and walking up to me with the baby in one arm, while she shook her other at me, she said—

"You little liar, how dare you?"

I did not flinch a bit. I looked her steadily in the face, and replied—

"You did take it, and you know it. And baby cried for some too, yet you would not give her a bit!"

"Well, I never," exclaimed the shame-faced girl, determined by her effrontery to put me down.

The mother was easily convinced that I was the real offender, for the girl was a favorite with her, from being an adept in a certain kind of coarse flattery.

"You little wicked creature!" she cried, shaking her finger at me—"first to steal baby's candy, and then to tell a falsehood about it. Oh! I could shake you to pieces."

She rushed at me as she spoke, and seizing me, shook me till the breath had nearly left my body. I bore it without a complaint—a little sullenly, indeed, I have no doubt. But my spirit was not cowed.

"Julia did it, and not I," were my first words as soon as I could speak.

A violent blow upon the ears, that sent me reeling against the dresser, wounding my head so that the blood flowed profusely, was the answer. Most children would have cried; I did not; I went out to the pump, and washed my head, determined not to show a sign of giving in, if I died. And that I might die, in my ignorance, I thought not impossible. I felt dreadful—no one can imagine how I felt—but I would not succumb; indeed how could I, for I had told the truth?

At last, Aunt Sarah came, and examining my head, tied it up. The others had sent her, no doubt, too proud to come themselves. She chided me severely for what she called my falsehood, and would have punished me, I know, if she had not considered my wound sufficient punishment.

I saw it was no use to deny the charge, and so made no answer.

From that day I was regarded by all in the house, as one who would not hesitate to tell an untruth.

I sometimes look back on those days with astonishment, and regard it almost as a miracle that I did not become the wicked thing I was believed to be.

A new sorrow was soon added to my other ones. The only thing I had to love was a pet chicken, which I had found wet and dying, and which I had nursed until it had become well again. This favorite, now quite grown, would

follow me about the grounds—into the house it was not allowed to come—and would eat from no hand but my own. The day after the scene I have described, I found it dead by the garden-gate. I thought then that my heart would break.

While I was still weeping over it, Julia came up, carrying the baby. She looked stealthily around, to see that no one was observing her, and then said, shaking her clenched hand in my face—

“So you tell tales, do you, you little hussy? Tell tales on me again if you dare, and I’ll kill every chicken you love if there are a hundred of them. Now tell that I killed it, and see if they’ll believe you.”

I believe I could have killed her, at that moment, if I had been strong enough, and a knife had been in my hand—God forgive me for it! But let none who do not know how the orphan is tempted, censure me unduly. The taunt of the girl, and her devilish revenge—for I must call it such—dried my tears at once. I rose, picked up my dead pet, turned my back on her, and seeking the depths of a neighboring wood, there buried my favorite with many sobs.

This was a specimen of the way in which my life passed.

About two months afterward, Julia was caught, by her mistress, robbing one of the drawers. Ah! what a triumph it was to me, the day of her discharge. I said nothing about the past, but I knew from the kinder manner in which, for a time, I was treated, that it was known I had been wronged.

I had but one pleasure, and that was to steal away and sit alone, hour after hour in the woods, listening to the leaves rustling overhead, or to the noise of distant water-falls, far down and unseen in the forest. The Valley Farm was indeed a lovely spot, and surrounded with picturesque loveliness. Have I yet described my birth-place? I believe not; I will at once do it.

The house had been built at two different periods, half a century apart. The oldest portion was the smallest, and was now used for the kitchen; but even the newest half was old, comparatively so at least; for in this country, where nearly every house is of recent erection, or made to look so if it is not, a dwelling that bears unmistakable signs of having been built for fifty years, may be considered old. The whole structure overlooked a little river, or creek, as it was called in that section of the country, which was shadowed by noble old trees, and spangled, in every little nook, with water-lilies. At evening, the kine would come lowing up this stream on their way to the barn-yard, or perhaps a boat, bound to some

farm higher up, would go by with a quiet, rippling sound, as it was propelled against the current. In the rear of the house, the river wound off between willowy banks, into a broad expanse of meadow. Often would I sit, in my window high up in the gable, watching the long lines of mowers as they swayed to their work; and when the grass was down, inhale the fragrance of the new-mown hay. At other times, when sent to bed supperless, it was my solace to open my casement, and gaze upon the young moon rising softly in the east, or listen to the mellow harvest-song of the late-returning reapers, as it floated over the distant fields.

There was one spot on the river-bank, below the house, whither I loved to resort, to hear the waters gurgle at my feet, and to remark the effect of light and shade upon the old dwelling—for even then I had the eye of an artist. In the early morning the view was beautiful. I do not know whether the dews fell heavier or lay longer here than in other places, but it always appeared to me as if they did: indeed so brilliant were they, that when the sun was even two hours high, the whole landscape, as seen from my favorite nook, seemed to glitter, far and near, with diamond-like freshness. Here I would go to learn my lessons, or execute my daily task of knitting; nor did my aunt prevent me, not perhaps because she saw it pleased me, but because it took me out of the way. I used to sit, knitting mechanically, while my gaze wandered from river to dwelling, from field to forest, from earth to sky, and my young soul drank in, with ear as well as eye, the immaculate beauties of the prospect. I could not analyze my feelings: I only was sensible that I was happy. I now know that it was through my imagination that I was thus comforted, and I bless heaven that such a glorious heritage was mine then, and still continues mine. I know that the mere worldling will laugh at this divine faculty. But many an hour of loneliness it wiled away, and many a tear it dried upon my cheek. If I could not find sympathy at home—alas! had I a home?—I discovered it in the woods, the waters, and the sky. Every wave that rippled to the bank, each leaf that rustled overhead, the bird singing in the brake, the variegated clouds piled on high, the butterfly with its spangled wings floating past, all, all were to me companions, comforters, friends. I would even sometimes imagine they could understand me when I talked to them—have you never done the same, reader? Perhaps not, for it may be you were never an orphan, and alone.

I had one other consolation, to which I have not yet adverted. Ever since that day, when my

dying mother followed me with her eyes to the door of her chamber, that last, sad, yet loving look, dwelt with me night and day. If I shut my eyes I could see it before me, and in my dreams I still beheld it. What a blessing and a solace it was to me! When misunderstood and persecuted, I had that refuge to which to fly. I had but to cover my weeping eyes with my hands, and lo! there was that angelic smile, that loving image. My mother did not seem to me dead, but ever present with me. The consciousness of this kept me from anything like falsehood, either in word or in deed; for I dared not do wrong, feeling as I did, that my mother's eye was upon me. Sometimes, in my great distress, I would weeping call upon her, and then, when the paroxysm had passed, a holy calm would descend upon my soul, and I would feel as light-hearted as a bird. I have since read, in the works of wise divines, as well as in the poetry of the almost inspired blind old Milton, that those we love, and who have died, are not utterly lost to us, even in this world, but that their spirits, hover around, angelically commissioned to warn us in peril, to solace us in grief, and to lead us "lambs in green pastures" up to the gates of glory. I believe it. I believe it, because I have felt it; and that too at an age when I could not understand it, and before I had heard that there were fathers in the church who taught this comforting doctrine.

But I must come back to the harder experience of my girlhood. Perhaps I tire you, with what you think rhapsody: if so, you will hear enough of the bitterness of truth; and so, let us proceed.

I was about ten years old, when, one day, I found in an old album of my Aunt Sarah's, some poetry that I wished to copy. I even then loved poetry. After some demur, she granted my request, at least in part, for there was one place she interdicted. I remember it well. It was original, and written in a masterly hand, nor were the sentiments, as far as I can now judge, unworthy of the penmanship. It was addressed to my aunt. I was too young then to understand it, but I suppose now that the poem had been written by some lover, for she seemed annoyed that I had seen it, closed the page, and made me promise not to look at it again.

I sat down to my task. The day was pleasant, a day in early June, when the sweetest flowers were in blossom. The casement was open, and as the wind eddied into the room, it came laden with perfume, while the drowsy hum of the bee floated soothingly to the ear. I had a commonplace book into which I copied, and this was now open before me. The delicious morning made

me intensely happy. I wrote awhile, and then laying down my pen, gazed on the landscape. In this way an hour passed. Once in my eagerness to watch a bird that had built its nest close to the window, and was now flying to and fro feeding its young, I upset the inkstand, and a whole page of my book was spoilt, so that I had to tear it out and begin again. But I cared little for this. I was happy. And thus another hour passed before I had completed my copying.

I had just finished, when my aunt came in. She put on an angry look, when she saw I was still at the table, and coming directly toward me, charged me, with some asperity, with having violated her commands. I assured her that I had not looked at any poem but the one she gave me permission to copy. She did not seem satisfied.

"What," she cried, "have you been all this time copying a single poem?"

I assured her I had. She shook her head.

"If you have, you are the most idle child I know," she cried. "You are always idle for that, and never will be useful, or come to any good." When my aunt was irritated she always told me this. "But I do not believe you: you have been copying that poem I told you not to look at: a pretty return this for my kindness in lending you the album: where is your book?"

She snatched my commonplace book as she spoke, and opened it at the place where I had torn out the blotted leaf. Meantime, I had risen haughtily from my seat.

When she saw the missing leaf, she looked at me severely. It was quite evident what she thought.

"Mary," she said, "I am shocked. I thought you had outgrown these things. How dare you tell me you did not copy the poem, when here is the evidence that you have both copied it, and torn out the leaf to avoid detection!"

"I did not copy the verses. That page was blotted accidentally, and I tore it out."

"Where is the leaf then?" she said, incredulously.

"I tore it into pieces, and watched them sailing down the river."

She lifted up both her hands, and gazed at me in mute astonishment.

At last she said—

"So young and yet so wicked!" Then as a gush of pity, I suppose, came over her hard nature, she exclaimed—"oh! that all my labors should be lost—that my prayers and teachings should be of no avail."

My heart was beginning to relent, and I was about to throw myself on her bosom, and with

tears assure her that I told the truth, but her next words prevented this.

"Mary," she said, "I will forgive you if you return me your copy of the poem."

I drew myself up coldly again. To be thus misjudged was an insult to my proud nature.

"I did not copy your poem," I said, coldly, but very decidedly.

Again she shook her head, and said sadly—

"Mary, I do not wish to punish you. Think again. Confess your fault. Say you copied the poem, and I will forgive you."

I was silent, biting my lip with rage.

"Speak!" she said, again becoming angry. My aunt was quick of temper, as I believe I have before said. "Why don't you speak?"

"I have spoken, and you won't believe me."

"Incorrigible! What, do you persist in a lie?"

"I tell no lie," I answered, angrily—"I was punished once because it was said I told an untruth, and, after all, you found it was Julia that did it."

This staggered her. But my scornful tone increased her rage, and, after a moment, she continued, as if reasoning with her conscience.

"But you were so long here—you might have copied the one piece in a third of the time—the leaf is gone—Mary," and she walked angrily up to me, so that I, thinking she would strike me, drew back, "this insolent, haughty, untruthful spirit of yours must be broken—and it *shall* be broken," she added, with emphasis. "There, I am not going to strike you, I would not stoop to that; but you shall go up stairs, to the closet in the gable, and there you shall stay, on bread and water, till you confess your fault. Come along."

I smiled scornfully, but obeyed her without a word. As she had said in reference to striking me, I would not *stoop* to remonstrate. I felt triumphant, not humbled, something as Ignatius must have felt when led to martyrdom. And I resolved never to sue for release if I starved to death.

The closet of which she spoke was at the very top of the house, a dark, but roomy affair, in which the family stored the heavy groceries. I knew it well. I had been imprisoned there once or twice before, only for short periods; but now I felt, both from my aunt's hard nature and my own resolute spirit, that it would be a long while before I came out, if ever.

We reached the closet door, when she made a last effort to move me.

"Tell the truth even yet, and I will let you off," she said.

I looked at her proudly and indignantly; but made no answer. With an angry exclamation

she pushed me in, slammed the door in my face, and double locked it.

I heard her footsteps go down the passage, descend the stairs, and die away in the distance. Until then I had stood. I now groped about in the dark, and finding a bag of coffee, used it for a seat.

I felt, all this while, as I have said, like a martyr. The strong, overpowering sense of injustice overcame every weaker emotion, and supported me. I resolved, with a sort of defiant retaliation, to keep my persecutor to her word, and not to touch anything but bread and water, even if it was offered to me. I believe, if I had died through my imprisonment, it would have given me a kind of savage pleasure; for it would have been revenge. How terribly are children sometimes perverted by a mistaken course of moral and mental treatment.

That day passed, and the next, yet my aunt showed no signs of relenting, and I was firmer, if possible, than ever. Twice she had come to my room, and asked me if I would confess, and both times I had experienced a sort of insane exultation in telling her that I had told the truth and meant to adhere to it. No one else visited me. I had not expected it, for no one cared for me. Stay! I must make an exception: the Irish servant girl, who brought up my frugal meal, showed pity in her countenance, and I blessed her for it. The only times I felt like weeping, were after she had left me.

On the third day, I was surprised at hearing steps approaching at an hour when I did not expect a visitor: for though it was nearly pitch dark in my place of confinement, yet the few chinks in the wall that let in air, let in also some faint sounds from outside; and by these my practised ear could tell whether it was morning, noon, or evening; and I judged that now it was about the middle of the afternoon. Soon the door opened, and Biddy, the Irish help, stood before me.

"Shure, darlint, my heart aches for you," she said, "and as the folk have all gone out to stay, I have just fried a few flitters unbeknown to them, and brought them up to you."

I felt the tears rising to my eyes at this kind act, but my pride choked them down, for I did not wish my persecutors to hear, even from Biddy, that I had wept. From pride also, I was resolute in refusing to eat.

"Now, do take one, only one; for you look, darlint, as if your own self had been spirited away, and some ghost had been put in your place. Shure, and it's not I will be telling on yees."

I waved away the proffered delicacy, but could not, as yet, speak, for my heart was in my throat, choking me. At last I said—

"No, Biddy, I am here for telling the truth, and kept here because I will not confess that I spoke a falsehood. They may cut my tongue out," I cried, passionately, "but I will never utter the lie they wish me to. They said I should have only bread and water, and only bread and water will I have, if I starve to death for it."

Biddy's tears flowed fast, and she tried her eloquence again, but I was inflexible.

"No," I said. "They think I tell falsehoods, and they will learn, some day, that so far from doing this, I will not even deceive them by eating in their absence what they will not give me when they are here."

At last Biddy departed, sobbing like a child, while I, feeling more like a heroine than ever, stretched myself on the floor, with the coffee-bag for my pillow, and went to sleep.

I think I must have grown feverish, or slightly delirious about this time. I should not wonder, for the air of the place was close, and I ate little or nothing. I remember that, on the fourth day, my mood changed, and that from being heroically silent, I passed into the other extreme, and lest my aunt should think me down-hearted, began to sing all the songs I knew, especially the comic ones, as loud as I could. Jim Crow had then just come into fashion, and I roared it out at the top of my lungs. Sometimes I danced it, as I had seen the black boy Jim dance it: and, on such occasions, I took care to stamp as loud as I could. Once, my aunt came to the door, and bade me, sternly, make no noise; but I sang on louder than ever. She slammed the door to, and went away, muttering that I would try the patience of a Job.

I had now found a way to annoy my persecutors, and how it delighted me! I sang till I was hoarse. I danced till I had to stop from sheer fatigue. I even yelled out a parody on one of Watt's hymns, which I had read somewhere in a newspaper. In fact, devilish passions had been excited in me by wrong, and I was fast becoming a little fiend.

But on the fifth day I rose exhausted. I was so hoarse I could scarcely hear myself speak. Every limb in me ached, and no wonder, for I had now been sleeping, for four nights, on the hard floor. I had caught cold, too, so that sickness, as well as fatigue, was at work on me; but I did not know this then.

I felt an intense thirst, and when my breakfast was brought up, drank the water off at a draught. But I could not eat. The very sight of the food

gave me a loathing, and turning my head aside, I motioned for Biddy to take the bread away. She left it, however, kindly saying I might have an appetite by and bye.

When the door closed and I was again in darkness, I thought I should have died, for my temples throbbed to bursting, and my limbs were so sore that I could not remain in any one position long. At last, by sitting drawn up into a heap, my aching head resting on the hard coffee bag, I found some relief; and finally sank into sleep.

But it was a broken slumber, and full of dreams of woe. I fancied I was on a rack, or consuming in fire, as I had seen others, in an old edition of Fox's Book of Martyrs. I thought the room was lit up by a ray that stole in somewhere, I know not where, so that I saw the opposite wall; but, instead of being almost within my reach, it receded further and further, until almost lost in the immensity of distance, when it began to approach again, and continued approaching, until a horrible fear seized me that it would crush me to death. I dreamed I was on a sandy and illimitable desert, with nothing in view upon its surface but the bleached skeletons of men and animals who had perished there; while above the hot and brazen sky shone down without a cloud; and as I turned my glazing eyes from side to side, my tongue, swollen by thirst, almost choked me, so that I tried in vain to articulate for water. Now and then I woke from these agonising dreams to a state of partial consciousness, but my pains were so great that I was glad to find relief again even in these delirious visions.

After many hours of suffering, the violence of my fever must have abated, for my dreams of thirst and of fire ceased, and more pleasant fancies came across my slumber. I thought I reclined against a rock, looking up to heaven, when, all at once, the firmament parted overhead, like a window, and a stream of the brightest glory shot toward the earth. Angels came and went, up and down this ladder of light, as in the picture of Jacob's Dream, in the great family bible. Suddenly, amid that bright throng, I recognized my mother, more dazzling and beautiful than any of the rest. She came toward me, but not with the pleasant smile of old: a look of sad regret and chiding was on her brow; and the angels, who stooped and played their harps, played airs of plaintive sorrow.

I shall never forget the anguish of that moment. The thought flashed over me that my mother believed, with all others, that I had spoken falsely; and oh! how inexpressible was my woe.

I stretched out my little hands, fearing she would leave me, and cried in piteous tones—

“Mother, mother, I did not do it. Oh! dear mother, you who are in heaven, know that I did not do it.”

A deep sob startled me, and instantaneously the vision fled. I woke, and opened my eyes, which, for an instant, were blinded with light.

The door of the closet was open, and a stream of sunshine poured in; and right in its centre stood my aunt weeping aloud.

She rushed to me—she pressed me to her bosom, and, with wild kisses, bore me out of the closet, and into my own room. I was too much startled to understand it then; but she had no

doubt heard me apostrophize my mother; and that had convinced her of her error.

I remember nothing for more than a week. At last I woke, too weak to raise my head, but convalescent, they said. Months elapsed before I was entirely well.

No allusion was ever made to the cause of my punishment. My aunt was too proud to beg pardon of a child. But, from that time, I was treated with more of kindness by her than I had thought possible, considering her hard nature.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)